

WORLDS APART  
Senseless Ethics &  
Rational Dictatorship

*MASTERS THESIS*

For Professor Dent

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SENSUALISM .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SENSUAL METAPHYSICS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SENSUAL EPISTEMOLOGY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SUPRA-SENSUALISM.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SUPRA-SENSUAL METAPHYSICS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SUPRA-SENSUAL EPISTEMOLOGY.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>SENSUAL ETHICS.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>SENSUAL POLITICS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SUPRA-SENSUAL ETHICS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>SUPRA-SENSUAL POLITICS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>HISTORICAL OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>IMMANUEL KANT.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>HEGEL .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>LOCKE.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>HOBBS.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>96</b>

*"Rationality ex post facto -- Whatever lives long is gradually so saturated with reason that its irrational origins become improbable. Does not almost every accurate history of the origin of something sound paradoxical and sacrilegious to our feelings? Doesn't the good historian contradict all the time?"*

Nietzsche, *The Dawn* (1881)

*"He sought to elaborate some new scheme of life that would have its reasoned philosophy and its ordered principles, and find in the spiritualizing of the senses its highest realization."*

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

## Introduction

The thesis of this paper is that there are two opposing philosophical paradigms in Western history. These paradigms originate in metaphysical axioms, axioms which in turn condition opposing epistemologies, ethics and political theories. The purpose of this paper is to trace the logic of these principles, both internally and with reference to four major philosophers: Kant, Hegel, Locke and Hobbes. The first section of the paper will outline the philosophical reasonings of both paradigms; the second will show how these paradigms have manifested themselves in Western history; the third will show these paradigms at work in the writings of four major philosophers.

The two approaches are referred to as *sensualism* and *supra-sensualism*. These terms represent the following philosophical approaches:

	<b>Sensualism</b>	<b>Supra-sensualism</b>
<b>Metaphysics</b>	Objective reality	Subjective reality
<b>Epistemology</b>	Empirical rationality	Revelation
<b>Ethics</b>	Individual rights	Despotic will
<b>Politics</b>	Limited democracy	Totalitarianism

The first section will analyze the metaphysics and epistemology of the sensual paradigm.

## **SENSUALISM**

Human consciousness being neither automatic nor infallible, it needs guiding principles to help it determine truth from falsehood. Consciousness errs, therefore philosophy is necessary. In the sensual paradigm, philosophy is a set of principles and procedures designed to aid consciousness attain and maintain truth, just as medicine is a set of principles and procedures designed to aid the body attain and maintain health.

The central premise of sensualist philosophy is that *all processes of consciousness are subject to error*. We will call this premise the *Uncertainty Principle*. The Uncertainty Principle contains two premises: the first is that error occurs, and the second is that error may be detected by comparing it with a standard of accuracy. The concept of error thus requires the concept of accuracy; if the mind never erred, or always erred, or had no capacity to tell truth from error, it would have no need of philosophy. The Uncertainty Principle thus holds the implicit premise that error can be perceived and corrected by some method.

In the sensualist paradigm, the discipline of philosophy is directly analogous to the discipline of medicine. We know that the body has erred by comparing it to a standard of functioning, or the *purpose* of the body. The purpose of the body is survival; we know that it errs when it fails to fulfill its purpose. Similarly, consciousness may err, and we know that it errs by contrasting it with a standard of functioning, or the *purpose* of consciousness. According to sensualism, the purpose of consciousness is to aid the survival of the body, thus it errs when it fails to fulfill its purpose.

How does sensualism know that the purpose of consciousness is to aid the survival of the body? The sensualist approach to life is that consciousness is a *physical* process, an *effect* of the physical brain. Being physical, consciousness cannot survive without the body; being alive, it wishes to survive, thus aiding the survival of the body is its highest standard of functioning.

Human life, of course, is a *choice*; one *need not live*; yet, if one desires life, one has chosen a value, a *preference* for life, over an opposite value, a preference for death. In the sensualist paradigm, the attainment of the value of life requires certain specific choices and actions, i.e. one cannot choose to eat sand or drink sunlight. One cannot attain the value of life by throwing oneself off a cliff. No action is required if one's choice is death; one need only sit and starve. If one chooses life, however, specific actions are required. The purpose of consciousness is to determine the best methods by which life may be secured; the purpose of philosophy is to identify general principles from successful expe-

riences in order to apply them to new situations, plan for the future, pass them on to new generations, etc.

Philosophy, to detect and correct error, must recognize a hierarchy of values. The first and highest value of sensual philosophy is the existence of human life, for without human life, no values can exist. The syllogistic expression of this is:

- 1) Philosophy requires values
- 2) Values cannot exist without life
- 3) Therefore the highest value of philosophy must be the existence of life.

Life is a *process*, for all its operations involve time. Thus the values of philosophy must be those processes which aid the *continued* success of life, just as the values of medicine must be those processes which aid the continued success of the body. For medicine, the sum purpose of those values is *health*; for philosophy they are *truth*.

## **Sensual Metaphysics**

Sensualism perceives rational consciousness as a *physical* process, thus its dependence on the body is absolute. The mind is an *effect* of the body, thus the highest value of philosophy is derived in the following manner:

1. The highest value of philosophy is the existence of life
2. Life cannot exist without the body
3. Thus physical health is the highest value of philosophy.

Thus no philosophical value may contradict the medical value of *health*. Because *truth* cannot exist without *life*, life is the highest standard of truth, the *first and final arbiter of value*. Truth, in other words, is that which is *good for life*. For sensualism, health is a necessary but not sufficient means to the end of truth; for medicine, health is an end in and of itself.

Sensualism holds the relationship between the mind and the body as absolute: because consciousness is a *physical* process, it is subject to the physical laws of cause and effect; i.e. it cannot possess *knowledge* of something without some form of *experience* of that something. Because the mind is completely dependent on the body, all experience must enter the mind through the medium of the physical senses; because the mind cannot contain information before experience, it is at birth a *tabula rasa*.<sup>1</sup> The mind therefore begins in a state of ignorance, yet gains information, thus the only source of that information must be a realm external to the mind. Because the mind gains this information

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<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that consciousness possesses no *instincts*; it is, for instance, well established babies turn their heads to receive a nipple. The sensual concept of the *tabula rasa* means that infants possesses no *concepts*, but merely the capacity to develop them.



through the physical senses, this external realm must be composed of material substances. This is the root of sensualism's first metaphysical premise:

*Material substance exists independent of rational consciousness.*

The mind first perceives sensual impressions of external reality as a chaos of disconnected images; it cannot organize them consistently, just as the mind cannot organize the movements of the body consistently. While the mind at birth is *tablula rasa*, it does contain an innate *capacity* for consistent identification of external substance, just as the body contains an innate capacity for consistent movement. The innate capacity of the mind for consistent identification soon begins to organize sensual information into consistent principles: a ball rolled under a blanket is no longer perceived as having disappeared, but as having an existence which transcends the immediate physical evidence of the senses. This *object constancy*, however, could not be developed if external reality acted in an inconsistent and unpredictable manner. The consistent behaviour of external matter is called *objectivity*, because it does not depend on the subjective perceptions of the observer. Subjective perceptions attain the status of accurate identification only to the degree that they conform to the objective behaviour of external matter.

Thus sensualism arrives at its second premise:

*Objective reality exists independent of consciousness.*

Now, since the body requires physical substance in the form of food, air, water and shelter in order to survive, and since this sustenance exists only in external reality, the *purpose* of rational consciousness for sensualism becomes clear, and may be summed up thus:

1. Physical health is the highest value of philosophy
2. Physical health requires the consistent identification of external physical substance
3. Therefore the highest value of philosophy is the consistent identification of external physical substance.

How does consciousness attain this end? In other words, what values does the mind *require* in order to correctly identify external physical substance? To answer this, we must examine the principles of sensual epistemology.

## **Sensual Epistemology**

The consistent identification of external physical substance first requires the validation of the physical senses, for if the physical senses are innately prone to error, external physical substance cannot be consistently identified. How, then, does sensual philosophy know that the senses are valid?

First of all, the senses must be viewed as a unified system of perception. No sense can be validated by reference to itself alone. A ball rolled under a blanket is no longer *visi-*

*ble*; if one gropes under the blanket, however, it is *touchable*. The value of having more than one sense is that external physical substance cannot be consistently identified by a single sense in isolation. Since rational consciousness requires the health of the body, and the health of the body requires that consciousness be able to consistently identify external physical substance, organisms relying on only one sense have a lesser chance of survival than those which develop more, especially those which, like human beings, inhabit complex and ever-changing environments. Thus, because human beings have developed more than one sense in order to increase their chances of survival, the senses cannot be analyzed in isolation.

The relationship between the senses and consciousness must be kept clear if the senses are to be accurately validated. According to sensualism, the senses do not transmit *conclusions*, only *information*. A woman standing in a desert, for instance, cannot determine whether she sees a lake or a mirage by referring to her eyes alone. If she approaches the lake, and swims in it, drinks it and tastes it, there can be no possibility that she perceives a mirage *because her senses do not contradict each other*. If, however, she finds that the lake disappears when she approaches it, she knows that the lake did not exist in the place she assumed it did, for her senses have contradicted each other.<sup>2</sup> Her *eyes* did not err, for eyes are organs that transmit impressions of light waves; those light waves did

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of a mirage, the senses do not contradict themselves when she approaches, because her eyes no longer transmit the image of a lake at her feet when she reaches the mirage.

in fact exist, and were transmitted as accurately as if they originated from a real lake.<sup>3</sup> It was her *consciousness* that misinterpreted the information, and her consciousness *knows* that it misinterpreted the information because the evidence of her eyes was not validated by her other senses.<sup>4</sup>

The principle is thus established: *accuracy in the identification of external physical substance is verified by the non-contradiction of the senses*. Because of the Uncertainty Principle -- that all processes of consciousness are subject to error -- any conflict between rational consciousness and the senses must be decided in favour of the senses. *Interpretation* must always bow to *evidence*.

Thus our initial statement: *consciousness errs*, is interpreted by sensualism in the following manner:

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<sup>3</sup> Which, of course, they did, just not in the place she thought.

<sup>4</sup>The argument for the validity of the senses does not mean that the senses always *perfectly* mirror reality, but that they supply information that best aids the survival of life. The eyes, for instance, invert light waves before sending them to the brain, thus equating *proximity* with *size*. This is perfectly adaptive, for life is naturally more concerned with what is *close* than what is *far*. The principle of sensual validity is not that the senses are perfect or universal mirrors of reality, but that the information they *do* transmit is objective. Limited knowledge is not invalidated by greater knowledge; one does not have to know calculus  
(continued)

1. The highest value of philosophy is the existence of life
2. The existence of life requires the consistent identification of external physical substance
3. The senses are accurate sources of information about external physical substance
4. Consciousness may misinterpret sensual evidence
5. Therefore consciousness must bow to the evidence of the senses.

The Uncertainty Principle thus resides in *conscious interpretation*. The senses are not subject to the Uncertainty Principle because they are not an operation of consciousness, but of the autonomous nervous system.<sup>5</sup> This validation of the senses does not imply that individual senses do not sometimes provide information that contradicts other senses or empirical reality. Effects such as visual mirages, the apparent dislocation of a stick in water, the misperception of the temperature of lukewarm water if the hands have been previously immersed in very hot or cold water, the mental perception of 'phantom limbs' after amputation and so forth all increase the chances of an erroneous interpretation. However, all these phenomenon remain open to validation by the other senses; mirages may be checked by attempting to touch them; a finger running along the immersed stick detects no dislocation; immersing the tongue in lukewarm water re-

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to know that  $2+2=4$ . Thus the fact that the eyes, for instance, cannot perceive infra-red rays without aids does not invalidate the accuracy of their natural perceptions.

veals its true temperature; a thermometer may also be used, in which case the eyes detect the mercury level and recognize the true temperature; the misperception of 'phantom limbs' may be corrected by looking at the stump or touching it. Thus when the *accuracy* of the senses is referred to, it should not be taken to imply the accuracy of any sense in *isolation*, but rather the combined cross-checking of *all* sensual information.

The accurate transmission of external physical *substance* is thus the province of the senses. The accurate identification of external physical *essence*, however, is the province of rational consciousness. Since sensualism holds that sensual information is more consistent than conscious interpretation, both empirical evidence and the natural laws of matter hold sway over all processes of the mind, both conscious and unconscious. "External evidence" is the totality of sensual information; the "natural laws of matter" is *reason*.

How does sensualism derive reason from the evidence of the senses? According to sensualism, we exist in an objective universe accurately perceived by the senses. Because we *perceive* accurately, we may *conceive* accurately, yet our conceptions, being products of our consciousness, are subject to the Uncertainty Principle and thus require the corroboration of the senses. The Three Laws of reason, for example, are directly analogous to the initial evidence of the senses:

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, one cannot open one's eyes and command them *not* to see.

A is A	A ball is a ball
A cannot both be A and non-A	A ball cannot be both a ball and not a ball
A is either A or non-A	A ball is either a ball or it is not a ball

Our example of a ball rolling under a blanket may thus be expressed as follows:

*The ball suddenly becomes a lump in the blanket. The ball cannot be both a ball **and** a lump in the blanket; it must be either a ball **or** a lump in the blanket. Since a ball is a ball, the ball must be under the blanket.*

The blanket is lifted and the ball is revealed, thus reaffirming the rational principle that material entities do not randomly change their nature, that *A is A*.

In the sensualist paradigm, *all* principles of reason are derived from sensual observation. Because objective reality is universal and consistent, physical laws apply equally everywhere, thus rational truth may be assumed even in the absence of immediate sensual information, in mathematics for example. However, mathematics not only bows to reason, it also bows to the evidence of the senses; if a ball is calculated to fall at a certain rate, and is empirically measured to fall at a different rate, the calculation is incorrect. In the realm of theoretical mathematics, entities are manipulated as *idealized forms*, or forms *identical* with the laws of logic. While the idealized forms are not derived from the senses, the *ideas* of both form and reason *are*.

Because all of the mind's information is derived from external reality through the medium of the senses, sensualism establishes the following epistemological principles:

*No operation of consciousness which contradicts either the laws of reason or the evidence of the senses is valid.*

Also, because concepts are derived from the observed characteristics of individual entities:

*No concept may contradict the individual characteristics it describes.*

There are many examples of the latter principle; the most important being the relationship between conceptual rationality and the senses. Because rationality is derived from sensual consistency, no operation of reason may validly contradict the consistent evidence of the senses. The accuracy of a rational prediction is thus *defined* by its consistency with empirical observations; if a prediction is inconsistent with empirical evidence, the prediction is irrational.

The relationship between *concepts* and *entities* is also conditioned by the principle that *no concept may contradict the individual characteristics it describes*. For instance, the concept 'chair' is a mental tag used to describe the common characteristics of chairs. Since the concept 'chair' is *derived* from the observation of individual 'chairs', no *general* concept



of 'chair' may contradict the characteristics of any *individual* chair. To allow the possibility of such a conflict would be like accepting a conflict between the concept of 'sweetness' and the 'sweetness' of an individual sugar cube. This is impossible because the concept of 'sweetness' is nothing more than a description of the 'sweetness' of individual entities. Any conflict between the concept and the entity must be decided in favour of the entity. Since the concept of 'sweetness' is a product of *consciousness*, it is subject to the Uncertainty Principle, while the taste of the individual sugar cube, being a product of the senses, is not. Thus concepts must always be modified for the sake of individual characteristics.<sup>6</sup>

This brings us to sensualism's greatest argument against supra-sensualism -- and will serve as a good introduction to the supra-sensual position:

<p><i>The greatest logical error in philosophy is the equation of concept and entity.</i></p>
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There are countless examples of this: 'collective good,' 'minority rights,' 'government spending,' etc. According to sensualism, *concepts* are derived from *characteristics of individual entities*, thus concepts may *only* embody those attributes which compose it, *not* those specific to particular entities. The concept 'government', for instance, indicates a

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<sup>6</sup>This approach is directly opposed to the Platonic idea of the Forms. According to Plato, sensual perceptions of individual entities are imperfect shadows of eternal and immaterial Forms. Thus the *concept* of  
(continued)

political structure; to say that a political structure *spends* is to equate the concept with the entity. *Individuals* may spend; governments may not, no more than the concept of 'seed' may be planted. Similarly for 'minority rights'; 'rights' are universal enforceable claims against others derived from characteristics common to *all individuals*; if they exist only for a minority, it is at the cost of other individuals; such *non-universal claims* are more properly called 'privileges,' for they both enforce and exclude.

According to sensualism, the equation of concept and entity is the most dangerous error of philosophy because it destroys the possibility of objective arbitration of contradiction or conflict. If the concept 'hard' may contradict individual manifestations of hardness, how can the concept possibly be validated? What other criteria for 'hardness' could there be other than the characteristics it describes?

Before analyzing the supra-sensual paradigm, we may sum up the sensual paradigm in the following table:

SENSUALISM	SENSUALISM
HIGHEST VALUE:	Physical human life
METAPHYSICS:	Objective Reality

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'chair' may contain characteristics which contradict any or all individual manifestations of 'chair'.

EPISTEMOLOGY:	Sensual Validity
LOGIC:	Concepts perfectly derived from entities
CONCEPTUAL THEORY:	Concepts exist in the mind
CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION:	Concepts depend on essence
CONCEPTUAL LIMITOR:	Concepts cannot contradict the characteristics of individual entities
TRUTH VALIDATION:	Empiricism/Rationality

## SUPRA-SENSUALISM

Now we must turn to the other side of the story and examine the *supra-sensual* approach to truth, noting how it deals with metaphysical and epistemological problems.

### Supra-sensual Metaphysics

Supra-sensualism rejects sensual metaphysics on the following grounds:

*We cannot be sure that our senses are valid, for in order to establish the validity of the senses, we must first assume the existence of an objective reality external to*

*consciousness that is accurately transmitted by the senses. This assumption negates any certainty that the belief is true.*

Because supra-sensualism finds the relationship between certainty and assumption problematic, it is led to a perception of reality that depends on the authority of *consciousness alone* rather than the senses or reason. Any authority external to consciousness raises the problem of having to *assume* its authority, and with it the perceived disparity between certainty and assumption.

Supra-sensualism's highest value, therefore, cannot be conditioned by anything external to consciousness. Neither the physical survival of the body nor the consistent identification of external physical substance can be the highest value, for both are external to consciousness. Thus supra-sensualism must sever the sensual unity of mind and body. While for sensualism consciousness resides in the material body, *for supra-sensualism consciousness resides in the immaterial soul*. Consciousness, being non-physical and eternal, does not require physical sustenance in order to exist. Thus the supra-sensual syllogism becomes:

- 1) Philosophy requires values
- 2) Values exist *without* the body and/or empirical reason
- 3) Therefore the highest value of philosophy is neither the existence of the body nor the authority of empirical reason

4) The highest value of supra-sensualism is thus *unsubstantiated, immaterial assumption*.

The essential difference between sensualism and supra-sensualism lies in the second premise. Values can exist in the absence of material life, therefore material life is not the highest value. The highest value of supra-sensualism is thus not material life, but *immaterial assumption*. While sensualism argues that values cannot exist without the body; supra-sensualism argues that because values *do* exist without the body, values remain in the absence of physical life. Where do they remain? In a *supra-sensual, immaterial realm*, usually termed the *soul*, or *God*.

This is the *metaphysical* approach of supra-sensualism -- how does this approach condition supra-sensual epistemology?

## **Supra-sensual Epistemology**

Because material reality is considered a lower value than immaterial perception, supra-sensualism cannot derive concepts from individual entities. Supra-sensual epistemology opposes the sensual axiom that *material reality exists independent of rational consciousness*, thus concepts cannot be conditioned by either the senses or empirical rationality.

For supra-sensualism, material entities are imperfect reflections of immaterial concepts, and thus of lesser value. Because the highest value is *not* material reality, and the senses transmit impressions of *matter*, consciousness cannot derive its highest value from the

senses. The senses may be considered potentially valid to the degree that they represent material reality, but cannot be the final arbiters of truth. In fact, because the senses *contradict* the highest value of *immaterial assumption*, they tend to be perceived as a source of *distraction*, of *error*. Thus supra-sensualism restates the Uncertainty Principle in the following manner:

<i>All processes dependent on <b>physical matter</b> are subject to error.</i>
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Epistemologically, this premise results in a rejection of sensual validity and empirical reason, since both depend on material processes. The highest value must contain no material taint; it must remain *unconditioned* by any considerations external to consciousness. It must be absolute, unqualified, unreserved, underived, unconditioned and irrevocable. The highest value of supra-sensualism, in other words, must be *faith*.

*Faith* is belief in the absence of objective standards, either empirical or rational. To believe without sense or reason is, essentially, to refrain from applying any objective standards of belief. *Faith* is, in other words, the *absence* of any standards external to consciousness. For sensualism, belief is conformity with the senses and empirical rationality. For supra-sensualism, belief is *faith in irrational revelation*.

Because supra-sensualism's highest value -- *faith* -- is not dependent on matter, all processes dependent on matter contradict the highest value according to the following syllogism:

- 1) The highest value is immaterial
- 2) The highest value contradicts the properties of matter
- 3) Therefore any values based on the properties of matter contradict the highest value.

Supra-sensual rationality thus cannot be derived from the consistent behaviour of individual entities, for individual entities are material. How, then, can the mind possess rationality? Supra-sensualism invokes the soul/body dichotomy to deal with this problem. The *soul*, according to supra-sensualism, *is* rational; the body (including sensual evidence and empirical rationality) *impedes* rationality. This solution is best demonstrated by analyzing the supra-sensual approach to concept-formation:

*The soul possesses an innate knowledge of concepts. Rational consciousness employs concepts by comparing individual entities to conceptual archetypes inherent in the soul.*

Thus supra-sensualism solves the problem of the concept-formation in the absence of sensual information or rational validation. Yet why is this formulation necessary?

Simply because *supra-sensual concepts possess characteristics which contradict the characteris-*

*tics of individual entities.* Supra-sensual concepts tend to revolve around immaterial forms which contradict the properties of material entities, such as disembodied intelligence, formless good, absolute mind etc. Because these immaterial concepts contradict the nature of material entities, entities must be considered a lower value than concepts. This is demonstrated in the following syllogism:

- 1) Immaterial reality has a higher value than material reality
- 2) Concepts exist within immaterial reality
- 3) Entities exist within material reality
- 4) Thus concepts have a higher value than entities
- 5) Therefore in any conflict between concept and entities, concepts are the final arbiters of truth.

Thus all concepts *derived* from material entities are of a lesser value than concepts *innate* to immaterial reality. Empirical reason, therefore, bows to faith, for empirical reason is derived from the material senses, while faith is innate to the immaterial soul. It is through the appeal to *innate faith* that supra-sensualism escapes the problem of the uncertainty of deriving truth. Because all derivations of truth rely on material processes -- i.e. the senses or empirical reason -- they are subject to the supra-sensual Uncertainty Principle -- which is that all processes dependent on physical matter are erroneous -- and, being erroneous, cannot be valid criteria for truth. Innate faith, on the other hand, is not derived from material processes, and thus is the final arbiter of truth.



Because the highest value exists independent of rational consciousness, the *purpose* of truth is not open to objective definition. Some formulations of supra-sensual purposes are: the attainment of Nirvana, Heaven, Bhuddist Transcendental Consciousness, unity with the World Spirit, conformity with the Absolute Will and so on. None of these goals are open to objective definition; their only consistent criteria tend to be *rejection*; rejection of material reality, of empirical reason, individual judgment, etc. Since the highest value of sensualism is the survival of the body, objective requirements must be met in order to attain the highest value. For supra-sensualism, however, no specific course of action may be undertaken to attain the highest value. Rejection of the senses and empirical reason is a necessary but not sufficient means to attain the highest supra-sensual value; *sufficient* means cannot be defined objectively or consistently, for both objectivity and consistency are derived from the properties of matter, and thus are subject to error.

Having concluded our examination of sensual and supra-sensual approaches to metaphysics and epistemology, we must now turn to ethics. The thesis before us is:

*Politics are derived from ethics, ethics from epistemology, and epistemology from metaphysics. Thus opposing metaphysics will always create opposing politics.*

We will now analyze the effect of opposing metaphysics on sensual ethical and political theories.

## Sensual Ethics

Sensualism believes that physical life is the highest value, thus that which best allows the body to survive is the highest value. Because the body requires material substance, and empirical rationality is derived from the consistent behaviour of matter, empirical rationality is man's most effective tool in dealing with material reality. The free use of reason is thus an essential moral value.

We shall term the sensual demand for the free use of reason the Rational Imperative.

How does the Rational Imperative manifest itself in ethics?

First we must examine the relationship between reason and violence. Reason is a faculty which depends on *choice*. The individual uses reason to *choose* between a higher value and a lower value; the initiation of violence undermines the individual's capacity for choice by creating artificial, unchosen and unpredictable situations. Reason cannot operate in a state of chronic violence, for reason requires a stable parameters in order to plan effectively. A farmer, for instance, who faces the continual theft of his harvest cannot rationally plan for his own survival. Reason's purpose -- the identification of external physical substance -- is pointless in a situation where such identification cannot be translated into action that benefits survival. The inmate of a concentration camp did not *choose* to enter it; if given the choice, he or she would choose to leave it. This choice exists, but choosing to leave would result in death. Obviously, in such a situation, rea-

son has become completely impotent; it can no longer serve to enhance the individual's ability to survive.

The opposition between reason and violence is the root of sensualism's most fundamental ethical imperative:

<i>No one may <b>initiate</b> force or fraud against another.</i>
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Because this principle is the *highest* value of sensualist ethics, no other values may contradict it. The principle of self-defense compliments this principle because since life is the highest value, it must be defended.

Now we may turn to the final question: how does the Rational Imperative manifest itself in *politics*?

## **Sensual Politics**

Life requires material substance; rationality is man's most essential tool for dealing with material reality. The application of reason to matter creates *property*, thus sensualism holds *property rights* as the central justification of any political system. The state is instituted to protect *property* -- including both the body and the goods it produces. Because the state is a *concept*, it may possess no rights that are not common to all individuals, for only individuals may possess rights. Thus *equality under the law* is a central premise of

the sensual state. Sensual epistemology, being based on the senses and reason, states that all sane individuals possess the ability to discern truth from error. Individual participation in the processes of government is thus essential, for to deny government *by and for the people* would be to propose that only a certain elite possesses the ability to discern truth from error. Thus the sensual state is *democratic*.

Yet the sensual democracy is not unlimited, because the *majority* is also a concept, and thus may possess no rights that contradict individual rights. Thus the sensual state is a *limited constitutional democracy*. The *limitations* exist in a system of checks and balances, for the Uncertainty Principle states that all operations of consciousness are subject to error, thus no individual or group may possess a monopoly on state power. The *constitution* of the sensualist state derives all its essential laws from the need to protect the property of the individual and the moral imperative against all initiations of physical violence and/or fraud.

The most fundamental question of political thought is: *how are conflicts to be resolved?* Because consciousness is prone to error, conflicts necessarily arise between individuals. The purpose of *law* is essentially epistemological; just as epistemology teaches men how to resolve disputes between truth and falsehood, law enforces the just resolution of such disputes. Sensual law, like sensual epistemology, resolves disputes according to the only criteria not subject to the Uncertainty Principle: the evidence of the senses and empirical reason. Thus the sensual legal system subjugates all processes of administering

justice to the objectivity of evidence and argument. In the absence of objective evidence, the Uncertainty Principle is reflected in the principle of *reasonable doubt*, which states that in the absence of objective proof, the accused must be acquitted due to the ability of consciousness to err.

Having analyzed the development of sensualist ethics and politics, let us now turn to supra-sensualism.

## **Supra-sensual Ethics**

To reiterate, supra-sensualism believes that faith is the highest standard of value; therefore that which best allows consciousness to attain faith is the highest value. Neither the senses nor objective reason serve this end, therefore the free exercise of empirical reason is *not* the highest value. Because concepts are the highest standards of value, and concepts (i.e. Soul, God, Faith, etc.) do not depend on matter, the survival of the body is not the highest value. Because concepts take precedence over entities, the good of the collective outweighs the good of the individual. The “good of the collective” does not denote the *majority*, for the majority is only a larger group of individuals, and thus does not equal the *concept* of the overall collective good. The *concept* of collective good is only attained by *revelation*, and this revelation cannot be communicated in objective terms, for it is neither rational nor empirical.

Thus the paradigm for supra-sensual ethics is:

*Knowledge of the Good is beyond rational investigation or empirical observation; it can result only from revelation. Thus the Good cannot be known by the majority; the Good may only be known by the individual who possesses the unsubstantiated knowledge of revelation. Thus morality is the judgment of the possessor of revelation. This individual does not **represent** morality; he **is** morality.*

Thus the highest good of supra-sensual ethics is: *the will of the Enlightened Despot.*

## **Supra-Sensual Politics**

In sensual ethics, conflicts are resolved by an appeal to the objective evidence of reason and the senses; thus sensual legality emphasizes logical motive and empirical evidence.

In supra-sensual ethics, conflicts are resolved by an appeal to the perfect judgment of the Enlightened Despot. This judgment may not be questioned by others, for they do not possess the perfect knowledge of revelation.

Thus supra-sensual politics are defined by the model of *Enlightened Despotism*. Only the Enlightened Despot possesses perfect knowledge of the Good, therefore the purpose of the state is to carry out his or her will. This will may not be judged by any objective criteria, therefore empirical or rational concerns such as the defense of property or the pro-

tection of individual rights cannot be valid criteria for disobedience of the despotic will.

Unlimited totalitarianism is thus the only valid political model for supra-sensualism.

We may sum up our conclusions so far in the following table:

SENSUALISM	SUPRA-SENSUALISM
Consciousness errs	Matter errs
Objective Reality	Subjective Essence
Sensual Validity	Sensual Error
Concepts perfectly derived from entities	Entities imperfectly derived from concepts
Concepts exist in the mind	Concepts exist in a higher reality
Concepts depend on essence	Concepts exist independent of essence
Concepts cannot contradict the characteristics of individual entities	Concepts can contradict the characteristics of individual entities
Empiricism/Rationality	Revelation
Individuals can determine truth	Individuals cannot determine truth
Objective Law	Subjective Judgment
Self-interest	Collectivism
Egoism	Altruism
Limited democracy	Totalitarianism

Before turning to a more detailed examination of some major philosophers of both schools, we will describe a brief overview of how these opposing philosophies have manifested themselves throughout Western history.

## **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The complexity of our analysis lies in determining the *degree* to which these opposing principles have manifested themselves in Western history. The argument that ethics and politics are derived from metaphysics and epistemology does not imply that these derivations are always absolute or automatic. If philosophical arguments were always perfectly derived from their premises -- and were those premises always consistent -- then the results would be as described above. Such consistency, however, is not found in the vast majority of philosophical thought. Thus we must consign this investigation to the analysis of trends.

Western history effectively begins in Ancient Greece. The Greek model centered around *idealism*, in which *conceptual reason* was the prime arbiter of truth. Lacking an equal emphasis on empirical observation, Greek philosophers strove for internal consistency in their system-building. Thus their success in abstract fields such as mathematics



and philosophy, and stagnation in empirical fields like technology, economics and government.

The Roman model centered around *pragmatism*, in which *material empiricism* was the prime arbiter of truth. What *worked* in the material realm was considered the good; discovering the principles *behind* what worked was not, however, greatly valued. Thus the Roman success in government, military and social organization, and stagnation in philosophy, technology and economics.

The Dark Ages were purely supra-sensual. Consciousness validated *itself*; neither conceptual reason nor sensual materialism determined truth. Tertullian's famous "I believe because it is absurd," and Augustine's "Believe in order that you may understand," clearly assigned the primacy of consciousness in the arbitration of truth. Tribal despotism was the political model; stagnation occurred in *all* fields of intellectual and social endeavour.

The Middle Ages first saw the rise of the pragmatic paradigm, with advances in practical productivity and empirical technology. The rediscovery of Aristotelian texts in the late twelfth century -- combined with an influx of Arabian fatalism -- created an explicit challenge to Christianity in the realm of metaphysics for the first time since the sixth

century.<sup>7</sup> Christian metaphysics was explicitly supra-sensual; no stable, objective reality was perceived to exist beyond the realm of consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Christian theology required the possibility of miracles and a creating, designing deity; Aristotelian metaphysics denied both the possibility of both miraculous intervention in natural laws and the physical creation of matter.<sup>9</sup> The attempt to reconcile Aristotelian rationalism with Christian revelation gave rise to the discipline of Scholasticism, exemplified by such theologians as Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas, William of Ockham, Albert the Great. These theologians generally took two approaches to the reason/fait h dichotomy. The first, initially proposed by Peter Abelard in the twelfth century then developed and applied by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, was to draw a clear line between the methodologies of reason and faith.<sup>10</sup> Faith was considered superior to reason, but reason was initially considered superior in terms of dealing with material substance. However, the exploration of material principles soon threatened Christian

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<sup>7</sup> Moody, Ernest A. Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science and Logic Los Angeles: University of California, 1975, p.294 It should be noted that accurate translations of Aristotle's works were generally unavailable until the mid-thirteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, Peter Damian argued that "God in His invariable and most constant eternity can so bring it about what will have been done in our transitory world may not be done; so that we can say; God can act so that Rome, which was founded in ancient times, will not have been founded." Quoted in Weinberg, Julius R. A Short History of Medieval Philosophy Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, MCMLXIV [1964], p.61

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p.15

<sup>10</sup> Tarnis, Richard The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped Our World View New York: Ballantine Books, 1991, p.178

metaphysics; the second line of defense for Christian theologians was a rejection of the validity of rational metaphysics.<sup>11</sup>

To defend itself, rationalism began to turn to empiricism, for reason cannot validate itself without reference to the senses and material reality. Empiricism first manifested itself in the humanistic approach to law, ethics and textual analysis. The growth of urban life, first in Italy, then elsewhere, created a need for the wisdom of antiquity, notably in law and ethics.<sup>12</sup> Traditional authority gave way to contemporary interpretation; scholastic logic gave way to humanist rhetoric; metaphysics to ethics; epistemology to classical education; the study of natural philosophy to the study of literature; the ideal of the cloistered monk gave way to the ideal of the active man of the state.<sup>13</sup>

However, while humanism created a new conception of aesthetics, it did not challenge Christian theology; its quarrel was with Scholasticism, not religion.<sup>14</sup> Thus it remained *pragmatic* in essence -- an essence undoubtedly conditioned by its close ties to Roman

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<sup>11</sup> These two approaches are noted in Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science and Logic, *op cit*, p.296

<sup>12</sup> Garin, Eugenio. Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance. Translated by Peter Munz. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965, p.3

<sup>13</sup> Hanna H. Gray: *Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence* in Renaissance Essays, ed. Paul Oskar Kristella and Philip P. Wiener, p.203

<sup>14</sup> Medieval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism, *op cit*, p.3

antiquity. Humanism conceptualized this pragmatism according to the premise: "It is better to will the good than know the truth."<sup>15</sup>

The conflict between concepts and the senses arose again; the senses became arbiters of truth, but were conditioned by Christianity's emphasis on the *universality* of concepts through the innateness of truth to the individual human soul. Humanistic aesthetics, or *purely* sensual ethics, began to displace supra-sensual faith as the arbiter of values in human life. *Conceptual* empiricism -- as opposed to *sensual* empiricism -- began to dominate intellectual life, and was characterized by the Humanist emphasis on the importance of original texts in determining accuracy and the rise of Roman law. What succeeded in the humanist movement is precisely what succeeded in Ancient Rome: government, military and social organization all saw immense progress; philosophy, technology and economics all stagnated, for the concept of *rational empiricism* had yet to

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<sup>15</sup> Petrarch: "The object of the will is to be good; that of the intellect is truth. It is better to will the good than know the truth." See Medieval Foundations of Renaissance Humanism, *op cit*, p.203

be fully systematized.<sup>16</sup> The central reason for this was that organized Christianity was too powerful to allow serious encroachments on its metaphysical monopoly.<sup>17</sup>

Due in part to the invention of the printing press, however, supra-sensual model began to break down. For the first time, a wide dissemination of original Christian texts became possible. With the spread of these texts, the enforced monopoly of medieval Christianity crumbled with remarkable speed during the resulting Reformation. Because supra-sensual revelation cannot be communicated objectively, it must be enforced in the face of contradictory opinions; if those contradictory opinions become too powerful, the supra-sensual model breaks down. These contradictory opinions existed not only in the realm of mathematics; the printing press also allowed the wide dissemination of scientific texts without which the Scientific Revolution would have been impossible.<sup>18</sup> Once the Bible became more widely available, the Humanist emphasis on the

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<sup>16</sup> This is not to say that there was no technological progress during this period. The Middle Ages saw the introduction of the windmill, water-wheels, horse collar, stirrup, heavy plow, compasses and the three-field system of crop rotation to note just a few. However, there was little progress in conceptual approaches to technologically; scientific crop management, for instance, did not occur until the sixteenth century.

<sup>17</sup> Three years after the death of Aquinas, for instance, in 1277, the Church made a list of condemned propositions, including many of Aristotle's and some of Aquinas's. The rationalist trend proved too strong to oppose with such heavy-handed measures, however; fifty years later, Aquinas was canonized. The Passion of the Western Mind, *op cit*, p.192

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p.226

primacy of the original texts began to undermine the authority of the Enlightened Despots, i.e. the Popes and Monarchs, whose claims to power rested on divine right. Individual interpretation began to displace collective command. This development challenged the supra-sensual faith in the perfect will of the Enlightened Despot; God was inaccessible, argued the Protestants, therefore the individual had to approach God on his own cognizance. The religious authority of the individual was recognized.

The invention of the printing press thus accelerated two individualistic trends: the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution. The conflict between faith and reason soon escalated, for both possess valid claims to internal consistency. The good, or the purpose of society could not be objectively arbitrated according to Christian texts, thus social conflicts escalated to unmanageable proportions, manifesting themselves in endless religious wars. The need for a third party able to arbitrate the conflict between faith and reason generated an interest in *sensual empiricism*. An emphasis on empiricism *qua* material reality -- rather than *qua* conceptual and textual analysis -- laid the foundations both for the artistic triumphs of the Renaissance and the analytical successes of the Scientific Revolution. The growth of perspective in art, gravity in sculpture, polyphony in music, secular themes in literature all reflected a growing respect for the perspective of

the individual *qua* material reality and, because this perspective was both material and sensual, for the body. Gargoyles gave way to Davids.<sup>19</sup>

The Scientific Revolution's emphasis on the authority of empirical observation firmly rooted the Uncertainty Principle in the faculty of consciousness itself. Faith had been undermined, therefore simplicity, consistency and universality were no longer the province of consciousness; these characteristics were now perceived as attributes of *matter*. Beliefs existed in the mind, yet the mind must bow to the evidence of the senses, therefore any theoretical construct, in order to be valid, had to accord with empirical observation. Impositions of *mental* simplicity such as the Ptolemaic system of perfect circles gave way to impositions of *material* simplicity such as the Copernican system of the sun-centered solar system. Because mathematics had always been associated with the divine mind, it was assumed that the properties of matter were best described by perfect forms such as the circle.<sup>20</sup> With the rise of empiricism, however, the scientific approach altered significantly. Matter was observed, and theories had to derive accuracy from observation; this began to displace the medieval habit of attempting to derive material theories from predetermined ideas of divine perfection and geometric simplicity. Consciousness no longer *made* reality; it was *part* of it, and thus had to be *condi-*

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<sup>19</sup> In the early Quattrocento, for instance, only one painting in twenty were of non-religious subjects; a century later, it was one in four. *Ibid*, p.229-230

<sup>20</sup> This was due in part to the rise of Pythagorean mathematics during the Neoplatonic phase of the Humanist movement. *Ibid*, p.218

*tioned* by it. Bacon's message -- that nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed -- placed the Uncertainty Principle in consciousness. The construction of abstract schemes of formal and final causes, teleological purposes and archetypal essences in the Aristotelian and Scholastic model was perceived as a circular, futile exercise.

The *empirical* success of the Scientific Revolution gave rise to the *conceptual* Age of Reason. Conceptual reason, the "only oracle", uniting with sensual empiricism for the first time in history, generated an unprecedented respect for the individual that culminated in a growing belief in the rights of man. All could observe, all could reason, thus all could determine truth from error, right from wrong. The need to enforce supra-sensual subjectivism gave way to the need to protect the right of the individual to perceive and pursue the good on his own cognizance. The unity of empiricism and reason created a new approach to conceptual organization; because all concepts were believed to be derived from individual characteristics, the age-old conflict between the good of the collective and the good of the individual began to tip towards the individual.

The rationalism of the Enlightenment, however, proved unable to address two essential spheres of human life: ethics and emotions. Reason seemed unable to solve the problem of developing a fully rational system of human ethics, and the intensely analytical bent of the Age of Reason seemed unable to integrate the passionate, creative side of man. The religious impulse, sorely threatened by empirical rationality, regrouped in these two areas, giving rise to the Kantian metaphysics of morals and the Rousseauian epis-



temology of passion. These two movements attacked rationalism in its weakest areas, marshaling the forces of Christian ethics and a saintly, almost ecstatic love of the cosmos that had always been an undercurrent of Christian theology. The concepts of God as abstract good and God as saintly nature strove hard to carve a place for themselves in an increasingly secular world.

The unity of reason and empiricism created a radical new science: Economics. Prior to the rise of individualism, the economic self-interest of the individual was considered harmful to feudalism, just as individual interpretation of the Bible was considered harmful to organized religion. The concentration of ethical and practical criteria in the individual characteristics of the senses and empirical reason, however, gave rise to the idea that good of the individual was the *only* good. Society was perceived as nothing more than an aggregation of individuals, as a *concept*, therefore individuals -- as *entities* -- took precedence over the *concept* of the collective. Thus the nature, behaviour and choices of the individual became the most significant aspect of social analysis. This analysis, applied to material productivity, gave birth to *economics*.

Economics is a discipline which analyses the empirical effects of individual reason on material productivity. Economics differs from the physical sciences in that the latter uses this process in the analysis of *empirical accuracy*, while the former uses it in the analysis of *empirical productivity*. Just as the growth of individual authority in *theology* required the eventual separation of church and state, the growth of individual authority

in *property* required the partial separation of state and economics. The destruction of the guild system for the sake of individual initiative was very similar to the destruction of state-enforced religious orthodoxy for the sake of individual faith. The ability of the individual to determine value from non-value created a demand for the removal of arbitrary violence in the religious, political and economic spheres. In religion, this resulted in *freedom of faith*; in politics, *limited democracy*, and in economics, *individual property*.

Yet this movement was not the end of collective control. Several problems remained; the threatened end of religion seemed to carry with it the end of the unity and purpose of society itself. The problem of universals had not been satisfactorily solved by Rationalism; the dichotomy between reason and emotion, mind and body, concept and entity remained a source of great tension among rationalist philosophers, most of whom retained powerful vestiges of supra-sensual metaphysics in the form of Deism or explicit Christianity. Because the relationship between empirical reason and individual ethics remained unsolved, reason became regarded as a tool of *knowledge*, yet not of *morality*.

In the late nineteenth and twentieth century, the death of faith created a philosophical and moral void; human life seemed increasingly devoid of purpose, of value, of any relationship to a state, motive or entity higher than itself. No longer sustained by faith, unable to find sustenance in analytical rationality, the moral sense of man seemed to

collapse and expand simultaneously. Art broke all conventions, then found itself spinning in a void. Belief in the inevitability of human progress foundered in the trenches of the first world war. Belief in objectivity collapsed in the face of the Freudian insistence that the rational ego was not the master of its own house. The irrational will of faith, formerly restrained by organized religion, broke free of all restrictions; the individual vaulted all inhibitions, hoping to create a new, uncensored morality, the morality of faith in *oneself*. This development threatened the political basis of society in a very fundamental way.

The most fundamental social contract is *that the individual must act with restraint*. In its essence, society is little more than a group of individuals who have agreed *not* to do certain things. The nature of *what* is restrained varies -- dictatorships restrain individuality, democracy restrains violence and so on -- but the essential contract remains the same: *you must act with restraint*.

Individuals within society must generally *agree* on what is to be restrained; excessive disagreements in this area cause political unrest and raise the specter of civil war. The grave danger of the supra-sensual model is that, by destroying the epistemological authority of the senses and empirical reason, it creates a situation where the individual will has no objective values with which to restrain itself; if the good is beyond comprehension, the individual cannot limit his actions by reference to the good. To counter this, supra-sensual societies create powerful social bodies to enforce the chosen re-

straint; the church, the aristocracy, etc. Because supra-sensual societies cannot generate conformity by appealing to the rational self-interest of the individual, they are forced to impose conformity from above.

Modern Western society has liberated the individual will from three central restraining agents: the church, the community and ethical imperatives. Since the separation of church and state, the church has lacked its necessary ally, and thus is no longer able to regulate the behaviour of individuals. The community has withdrawn its regulation of the individual due to personal mobility, welfare, etc. Most modern countries also lack a commonly-recognized ethical system due to philosophical stagnation, falling educational standards, massive immigration, etc.

The dissolution of the social contract of individual restraint in the late nineteenth century threatened the very existence of civil life. How was the will of the individual to be restrained in the absence of religious, communal or moral orthodoxy? There was only one answer: the *tribe* -- in the form of the *state* -- began to assert its control over the individual. As religion fell, statism rose, primarily in the forms of nationalism and racism. The danger of this soon became apparent. Religious control bowed to religious imperatives; God stood *above* the Church; religious orthodoxy was *itself under the moral law of God*, and could be appealed to in the face of injustice; this was the example of Luther. The state, however, is a *self-defined* structure; to what higher law can the individual appeal in the face of perceived injustice? The *natural* law of God gave way to the *positive*

law of the state. The moral authority of the individual disappeared. The will of the ruler subjugated the will of the individual. Might became right. In many countries, the optimistic democracy of the nineteenth century gave way to the totalitarian statism of the twentieth century.

The political necessity of state control over the individual manifested itself in many forms, all centered around the destruction of the unlimited will of the individual. Philosophically, however, the end of *conceptual* limitations to the will of the individual manifested itself in the growth of radical relativism, or the liberation of the individual will from objective absolutes. Existentialism encompassed this development in the formulation: *existence precedes essence*. All limitations are *chosen*; being chosen, they cannot be *imposed*. The growing dichotomy between *relativism* in philosophy and *absolutism* in politics severed the relevance of philosophy to life; in the twentieth century, philosophy entered a *scholastic* phase; its emphasis on the *self-legislation* of individual will contradicted the social need for individual restraint. Disconnected from social reality, philosophy became a purely academic pursuit; the severing of *theory* from *practice* left Western civilization prone to a Roman form of pragmatism: the pursuit of immediate expediency. Democratic political structures accelerated this pragmatic trend by encouraging political leaders to focus on short-term objectives.

The combination of radical relativism in philosophy, coercive regulation in law and short-term pragmatism in politics combined to create the welfare state, which is the

most significant development of modern Western society. Radical relativism undermined the possibility of individual self-regulation; coercive regulation embodied this trend by regulating the moral choices of the individual; pragmatism directed the growing state control over the individual's economic resources towards short-term political expediency. The individual is perceived by the welfare state as being unable to plan for his or her retirement, save for possible unemployment, choose health insurance, be generous to indigents and so on. The state also controls or regulates rental agreements, food and gas prices, alcohol and cigarettes, hallucinogens, employer/employee contracts, school curriculums, bank reserves, currency, interest rates, business licenses, artists, farmers, doctors, culture, language, pharmaceutical drugs and a thousand other aspects of individual life. This minute, invasive control contradicts the basic democratic principle of a responsible population; citizens are considered too incompetent to plan for their own lives, but competent enough to vote on complex political issues. There are only two possible resolutions to this contradiction; either the individual will be considered incompetent, resulting in dictatorship, or competent, in which case government regulation of personal responsibility will have to be withdrawn, resulting in a complete separation of state and economics and a reassertion of individual responsibility.

The separation of state and economics must be brought about for the same reasons as the separation of church and state. The invention of the printing press in the early six-

teenth century allowed the wide dissemination of religious texts. Access to these texts created a wide variety of Christian sects; Lutherans, Anabaptists, Zwinglians, Calvinists and so forth. The unity of state and church, combined with a wide variety of sects, created a situation of intense political instability as each sect attempted to gain control of the state in order to enforce its own religious approach. The only solution to this was the separation of church and state, which destroyed the possibility of persecution on the grounds of faith and allowed individual responsibility in the realm of religion.

In a similar manner, technological innovation in the realm of information management has created a destructive social tension between the economy and the state. Prior to the rise of computers, state control over the economy was limited by the amount of manpower required to regulate the movement of economic resources. Tax increases were limited because they required additional resources to enforce and collect. The introduction of computers, however, has removed the limit of diminishing returns on tax increases. The difference between physically collecting additional taxes and deducting salary at the source is hard to overestimate. The first requires immense resources; the second can be effected by pushing a button. Thus the relationship between the state and the individual has changed irrevocably; no longer is the individual protected by the inefficiency of state control of his or her economic resources.

The massive growth of state control over the economy -- made possible by technological innovation -- has created a state of political instability directly analogous to the growth

of civil unrest during the Reformation. Just as the concentration of religious power in the hands of the state forced religious groups to vie for control over the state, the modern concentration of *economic* power in the hands of the state has forced groups to vie for control over the economic power of the state. This is the root of the modern problem of interest groups, lobbying and the economic politics of preferential legislation. Interest group political manipulation is best understood as a state of legalized civil war, with each group attempting to pressure the government to extort additional funds from the general population and turn it over to the group. Each group attempts to control the economic power of the state in order to further its own interests; farmers seek subsidies, businesses seeks tax breaks; the elderly seek additional pensions; the poor seek additional welfare; artists seek additional grants; students seek additional loans, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Power is held by these groups is directly proportional to their ability to provide organized voting patterns; thus the elderly get pension increases, while the middle class gets endless tax increases.

The relationship between these groups and the general population is similar to the relationship between an individual and mosquitoes; each mosquito gains survival its parasitism; the individual stands to lose only a few drops of blood. Thus the mosquito has an enormous incentive to attach itself to the individual; the individual has only a small incentive to swat the mosquito. The danger arises when thousands of mosquito's attack the individual. Each farmer, for instance, stands to gain thousands of dollars from lob-



bying; each individual citizen will lose only a few dollars. Thus the incentive for farmers to lobby vastly outweighs the incentive of the non-farmer to resist them. The danger arises when thousands of lobbyists all attach themselves to the body politic; the average individual's income becomes steadily drained by the actions of countless interest groups; opposing any one of these groups will not significantly affect his income; opposing all of them is impossible.

The creation of such disparate incentives and rewards has created a state of chronic economic warfare; the attackers are interest groups; the defenders are the besieged middle class. The purchasing of votes with economic resources has created a condition of chronic discontent and political lethargy. The impossibility of effectively opposing these groups alienates the average citizen from the political process; the short-term pragmatism of politicians creates a powerful incentive to engage in deficit financing, allowing them to placate interest groups without immediately antagonizing the general population.

The only solution to this problem is the complete separation of state and economics, for the same reason that the separation of state and church became necessary. This will eliminate the social tensions generated by the ability of the state to control vast amounts of money, just as the separation of church and state eliminated the social tensions generated by the ability of the state to control religion.

However, for the separation of state and economics to be rationally feasible, the moral responsibility of the individual must be reaffirmed, just as the religious responsibility of the individual had to be affirmed before the separation of state and church became feasible. The moral responsibility of the individual, however, cannot be affirmed until the individual is recognized as a self-regulating moral agent -- and this cannot be achieved until the moral authority of the individual is recognized. The recognition of individual moral authority, in turn, cannot be achieved until the individual regains a belief in his ability to objectively determine truth from falsehood, right from wrong. This requires a recognition of the validity of individual epistemological attributes: the validation of the senses and empirical rationality.

Western civilization is currently undergoing a profound, crippling crisis. The sensual traditions of objective reason, individual rights and the validity of the senses is warring with the supra-sensual traditions of relativism, political despotism and the supremacy of faith. Property rights are succumbing to state control; intellectual freedom to tribal conformity; individual autonomy to collective identity. The growing violence of collectivism is undermining the value of reason to the individual; shorn of moral authority, the individual is forced to seek protection of the tribe. In politics, this trend is evidenced by the subjugation of the individual vote to pressure-group warfare. In economics, the individual right to property is being destroyed by the hijacking of state power by interest groups.

Western civilization hangs on the fulcrum of change; the sensual, democratic imperative of individual responsibility weighs one end, while the supra-sensual, totalitarian imperative of the impossibility of individual responsibility in the face of an incomprehensible universe weighs the other. The scale is tipping towards supra-sensualism in the form of radical relativism; the only chance to tip the scale the other way is to establish a fully rational system of philosophy, from metaphysics, epistemology and ethics to political theory.

## PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

Now we will turn to the *analytical* section of this investigation. The thesis here is:

*Politics are derived from ethics, ethics from epistemology, and epistemology from metaphysics. Thus opposing metaphysics will always create opposing politics.*

We will examine noted supra-sensualist philosophers, in order to determine whether the relationships argued at the beginning of this thesis hold true.

## IMMANUEL KANT

Kant's metaphysical approach is purely supra-sensual:

"The universe, or Nature, is actually a formal system imposed upon our sensations by the mind rather than an objective reality known by its accurate reflection within the mind."<sup>21</sup>

Kant divides reason into two categories: speculative and practical. Speculative reason deals with fact, practical reason with choice. Practical reason is the province of morality, and is "pure of everything derived from experience."<sup>22</sup> It embodies *meaning*, or *perspective*; Kant's argument is that we know the universe through experience, but the *foundation* (*grundlegung*) of that knowledge cannot be known by experience, for it *conditions* experience, and to argue that experience conditions *itself* would be tautological. Thus our framework for our experiences is derived from *a priori* knowledge, or innate rationality, while the experiences themselves are *a posteriori*. The logic of "pure material philosophy" is *metaphysics*, which is not derived from experience.<sup>23</sup> Where, then, does

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<sup>21</sup>Kant, Immanuel Kant on the Foundation of Morality: A Modern Version of the *Grundlegung*, Translated with a commentary by Brendan E. A. Liddell London & Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970, p.4

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid*, p.9

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid*, p.21 Kant's argument is: "By a priori knowledge we shall, therefore, in what follows understand, not such knowledge as is independent of this or that experience, but such as is absolutely independent of all experience. A priori knowledge is pure, when it is unmixed by anything empirical. The proposition, for instance, that each change has its own cause is a priori, but it is not pure, because change is an idea (*continued*)

this logic come from? From the *noumenal* realm, a realm of pure thought, a conceptual reality completely unrelated to experience. These concepts -- *noumenon* -- do not conform to sensual rationality in any way:

“Now the conception of a *noumenon*, that is, of a thing that cannot be an object of sense, but is thought, by pure understanding alone, as a thing in itself, is certainly not self-contradictory, for we cannot know with certainty that sensibility is the only possible mode of perception. Moreover, the conception of a *noumenon* is necessary to prevent sensuous perception from claiming to extend to things in themselves, and to set a limit to the objective validity of sensuous knowledge. In the end, however, we are unable to understand how such *noumena* are possible at all, and the realm beyond the sphere of phenomena is for us empty.”<sup>24</sup>

The Kantian distinction between *perception of things* and *things in themselves* follows our supra-sensual model perfectly. Sense-perception provides consciousness only with *images* of things; it gives us no knowledge of *things in themselves*.<sup>25</sup> Kant readily admits that, according to sensual empiricism, *noumena* are self-contradictory, but denies that we can extend sensual rationality to the *noumenal* realm, for we cannot be certain that

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that can be derived only from experience.” The Philosophy of Kant: As Contained in Extracts from His Own Writings edited and translated by John Watson, LL.D. Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie & Co. 1934, p.9

<sup>24</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.132

<sup>25</sup>“...whatever impressions we receive, such as sensations, which do not arise from our own design, give us knowledge of objects only as we are affected by the impressions. What the object may be like in itself we have no way of knowing. Consequently, no matter how clearly we attend to the impressions, we can obtain only a knowledge of the objects as they appear to us, never a knowledge of things in themselves.” Kant on the Foundation of Morality, *op cit*, p.223

empirical reason is the “only possible mode of perception.”<sup>26</sup> He invokes the *noumenal* realm as a barrier to objective reason; objective reason, being derived from experience, cannot apply to a realm unrelated to experience.

This is a classic formulation of the supra-sensual premise of a ‘higher reality’. The *noumenal* realm is irrational, contradictory and imperceptible, but may not be argued against because objective reason does not apply to it. Concepts exist in the mind; concepts cannot be derived from experience, therefore concepts must *pre-exist* in the mind:

“Now, that without which sensations can have no order or form, cannot itself be a sensation. The matter of a phenomena is given to us entirely *a posteriori*, but its form must lie *a priori* in the mind, and hence it must be capable of being considered by itself apart from the sensation.”<sup>27</sup>

Thus *matter* is transmitted by the senses, but *form* pre-exists in the mind. The problem of the existence of concepts *despite* the mind’s inability to trust its senses is solved by giving the mind innate access to *noumena* -- Kant’s version of the Platonic Forms. This fulfills the second tier of our supra-sensual hierarchy; an epistemological emphasis on innate ideas underived from sensual experience.

Now, our earlier argument regarding innate supra-sensual Ideas was that they must possess the ability to contradict concepts derived from sensual information. Kant’s argument is that *morality* is the province of the supra-sensual realm, because all moral

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<sup>26</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.132

concepts derived from physical processes are tainted by experience. Empirical principles are valid to the degree that they deal with *things as they appear*; they are invalid when they attempt to deal with *noumenal* reality, or *things in themselves*. Objective reason is thus *relative*, while “transcendental reason” is absolute. Because Kant’s purpose is to establish an *absolute* moral system, he can only do so by rooting his moral principles in the *noumenal* realm, for “experience cannot provide instances from which we could derive absolute laws.”<sup>28</sup> The absolute *ought* of morality thus can have nothing to do with empiricism, objective reason, rational self-interest or pleasure/pain:

“Thus we cannot expect to find the basis for obligation in the nature of a human being, nor in any set of human circumstances; rather we must seek this basis *a priori* in the concepts of pure reason itself.”<sup>29</sup>

Because the concept of ‘cause and effect’ is derived from *experience*, the moral good cannot have as its object the effect of tangible good. The moral good must be *a priori*, or unrelated to experience and objective reason in any way.<sup>30</sup> The moral good is thus a *good*

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<sup>27</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.22

<sup>28</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.93 Also: “Are we not constrained by the gravest necessity to erect a pure moral philosophy which is wholly free from the merely empirical descriptions of social science? The common ideas of duty and moral law make obvious the possibility of such a philosophy.” The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.24

<sup>29</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.25

<sup>30</sup>“The goodness of the good will does not consist in what it causes or produces, or in how well it achieves a given goal. Rather its goodness consists solely in its own activity, that is, in the way that it wills.” The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.44 This formulation closely follows the Lutheran criterion of *justification by faith alone*, as opposed to the argument for *good works*.

*will*, or a *noumenal* goodness.<sup>31</sup> This *will* cannot be conditioned by any material concerns; it must obey the *noumenal* concept of *duty*. Duty is the opposite of desire; transcendental reason's purpose is the extinguishing of desire, for desire is the opposite of duty, and thus morality. An action performed *against* duty is immoral; an action performed for the sake of duty *which gives pleasure* is *amoral*, for it clouds the purity of motive with self-interest. The only possible *moral* action is the performing of an action for the sake of duty *in which the actor either feels no pleasure or feels pain*.<sup>32</sup> Here we can clearly see the supremacy of the *noumenal* realm over the sensual realm. Not only does the 'higher reality' contradict sensual reality, but *the more it contradicts it, the greater its value*. The ideal actor performs moral actions *disinterestedly*: "We might define respect [for the moral law] as the awareness of a value which cancels out love of self."<sup>33</sup> This, of course, creates a significant paradox: how can we take an interest in something that denies self-interest? Kant's answer: we cannot know.<sup>34</sup>

Like most ethical systems based on irrational premises, Kant's moral system depends not on *rights*, but *reciprocity*. His Categorical Imperative is a reformulation of the Golden Rule:

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<sup>31</sup>"Nothing in the universe -- in fact, nothing whatsoever -- can we possibly conceive as absolutely good except a good will." The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.41

<sup>32</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.54

<sup>33</sup>The Philosophy of Kant, *op cit*, p.67

<sup>34</sup>Kant on the Foundation of Morality, *op cit*, p.252



*Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will to become a universal law.*<sup>35</sup>

The absolutism of this moral command cannot be overemphasized. Because a liar cannot lie if all lie, *no* lies may be allowed: if a murderer pursuing your mother asks where she is, you must tell the truth.<sup>36</sup> The Categorical Imperative, being reciprocal, is essentially tribal; a Muslim persecuting a heretic may act in accordance with Kant's principle on the following grounds:

*The attainment of salvation is the highest good. Heretics will not attain salvation; they also draw others from the correct path. I wish to attain salvation, thus I will submit to persecution if I stray from the path. Thus I will the principle of religious persecution to be a universal law.*

The principle of reciprocity, deriving itself from *command*, is opposed to the principle of *individual rights*. Reciprocity thus tends to be associated with oligarchical collectivism rather than constitutional democracy.

It is no exaggeration to say that Kant's ethical system -- the utter disregard for self-interest, self-love, the mindless obedience of a moral law that flies in the face of all rational and empirical considerations -- would be rather difficult for the average individual. The desire for self-interest and pleasure, according to Kant, is so deeply rooted in

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<sup>35</sup>*Ibid*, p.133

human nature that man remains a “radically evil” creature. In fact, the paradoxes of Kant’s ethical system would seem to do more to *paralyze* the individual’s moral choices than encourage consistent ethical behaviour.

According to our thesis, supra-sensual philosophers have no choice but to advocate dictatorship as the only ethical political system. Kant fits perfectly into our model. He describes the Enlightened Despot as *above* the law:

“The *equality* of subjects may be phrased as follows: Each member of the community has rights that entitle him to coerce every other member. Only the community’s head is excepted from that coercion. Not being a member of the community but its creator or preserver, he alone is authorized to coerce without being subject to legal coercion himself.”<sup>37</sup>

The individual has thus no legal or moral right to resist injustice:

“It follows that any resistance to the supreme lawmaking power, any incitement of dissatisfied subjects to action, any uprising that bursts into rebellion -- that all this is the worst, most punishable crime in a community... this ban is *absolute*, so unconditional that even the supreme power or its agent, the head of state, may have broken the original contract, even though in the subject’s eyes he may have forfeited the right to legislate by empowering the government to rule tyrannically by sheer violence, even then the subject is allowed no resistance, no violent counteraction. The reason is that once a civil constitution exists, *a people no longer have the right to judge how that constitution ought to be administered*. For suppose they had such a right and their judgment ran counter to that of the actual state: who is to decide which side is right? Neither one can act as a judge in his own case. To decide between the head and the people there would have to be a head

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<sup>36</sup>*Ibid*, p.74

<sup>37</sup>Kant, Immanuel On the Old Saw: That it May be Right in Theory But It Won’t Work in Practice, translated by E.B. Ashton Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974, p.59

above the head -- which is self-contradictory.”<sup>38</sup>

Our argument that, in the absence of sensual empiricism and objective reason, no *objective* third party exists to arbitrate conflicts between individuals. Thus the will of the Enlightened Despot is the only “third party” capable of judging. Being *himself* the standard of truth, he cannot be judged by any standard external to his own will.

## HEGEL

Religion is the most powerful manifestation of supra-sensualism. Religion contains many contradictions; one of the most central is that it holds as its highest value an inhuman entity described in human terms. This entity possesses human characteristics such as knowledge, virtue, etc., yet these characteristics are extrapolated to such a degree that they vanish from the realm of all possible knowledge, experience and thought. Infinite Man, in other words, is inhuman. One difficulty of this conception is how human consciousness -- being a product of divinity -- can err. The religious answer tends to be two-fold: consciousness errs because it attempts to know what it cannot, and because it is tempted by secular concerns. Thus man can neither rise to heaven nor live on earth; he is a divine demon trapped between infinite ignorance and finite evil. Set beside the infinite knowledge of a deity, individual consciousness disappears. Only foolish pride would prompt man to consider himself capable of certainty. The deity is the

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<sup>38</sup>*Ibid*, p.66-67 (emphasis added)

highest good; the deity and man are opposites, thus man cannot regard his self-interest as a valid criterion for the good. Yet man, being a finite being, can have no conception of infinite good. Thus man is left with *no* valid moral criteria. Yet for society to exist, man must be restrained; this problem is solved by the imposition of *duty*: duty being a command of obedience that refers neither to objective reason nor rational self-interest; duty is *obedience for the sake of obedience*. In this light, it is easy to see the relationship between Kant's Christianity and his emphasis on duty and subjugation.

Hegel is also a Christian philosopher. As we shall see, his arguments follow Kant's closely.

For Hegel, truth has three characteristics: it is infinite, absolute and unified. Metaphysically, he appeals to the absolute nature of a 'higher reality'. Epistemologically, the concrete is derived from the abstract, truth from falsehood, Nature from logic, and Spirit from Nature.<sup>39</sup> Because infinity is his highest value, "All finite things involve an untruth..."<sup>40</sup> Hegel rejects objective reasoning derived from axioms in true supra-sensual fashion:

"A so-called fundamental proposition or first principle of philosophy, even if it is true, is nonetheless false just because and insofar as it is merely a fundamental

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<sup>39</sup>Hegel, Hegel: The Essential Writings, edited and with introductions by Frederick G. Weiss London: Harper and Row, Publishers. 1974 Quoted in the Introduction, p.13

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid*, p.9

proposition, merely a first principle. It is for that reason easily refuted.”<sup>41</sup>

Epistemologically, Hegel, like Kant, recognizes the validity of empiricism in the realm of the senses; like Kant, however, he finds empiricism -- and objective reason -- incompatible with three infinite concepts: Freedom, Spirit and God.<sup>42</sup> Knowledge of these concepts requires a rejection of sensual empiricism:

“Thus the knowledge of God, as of every supersensible reality, is in its true character an exaltation above sensations or perceptions; it consequently involves a negative attitude to the initial data of sense, and to that extent implies mediation.”<sup>43</sup>

Thus Hegel follows our supra-sensual model perfectly; his metaphysics are of a supra-sensual ‘higher reality’; his epistemology is that supra-sensual concepts possess criteria which contradict the sensual characteristics of individual entities. The danger of *unconditioned* truth is quickly apparent:

“What spirit is in essence, or according to its genuine meaning, cannot be revealed to what is devoid of spirit... on the contrary, for reception through the Spirit to be possible, the receiver itself must be spirit.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>*Ibid*, p.3

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, *What is Philosophy?* p.26

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid*, p.30 The “mediation” referred to here is that of relegating empirical principles to the lesser realm of sensual information.

<sup>44</sup> Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion **Volume II: Determinate Religion** edited by Peter C. Hodgson Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, *Determinate Religion: The Lectures of 1827*, p.518

In other words, if don't already understand this "true science"<sup>45</sup> (i.e. faith), it cannot be explained to you. Individual judgment is irrelevant. In order to know, you must agree.

The supra-sensual problem of concept formation is solved in the expected manner: an appeal to innate knowledge:

"Nature is rationally ordered, it was made by a wise creator -- and wisdom is purpose, concept, free rationality itself. Thus spirit also knows that God is rational, absolute reason, absolute rational activity, and it has this belief instinctively..."<sup>46</sup>

It is unclear how this "instinctive" knowledge could remain unknown to atheists or druids; what is perfectly clear is that, in Hegel's scheme, *individual consciousness* has very little epistemological significance. The individual must reject the validity of his senses and the operation of his rational faculties to approach truth:

"The human being is essentially spirit, and spirit is essentially this: to be free, setting oneself over against the natural, withdrawing oneself from immersion in nature, severing oneself from nature and only reconciling oneself with nature for the first time through this severance and on the basis of it; and not only with nature but with one's own essence too, or with one's truth. We make this truth objective to ourselves, set it over against us, sever ourselves from it, and through this severance we reconcile ourselves with it. This oneness brought by way of severance is the first spiritual or true oneness, that which comes forth out of reconciliation; it is not the unity of nature. The stone or the plant is immediately in this unity, but in oneness that is not a unity worthy of spirit, is not spiritual oneness. Spiritual oneness comes out of severed being."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p.517

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p.524

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p.526

This is Hegel's version of 'doublethink': separation is unity; subjectivity is objectivity; severance is oneness; one must "sever oneself" from the knowledge that one has severed oneself, etc. By making the highest value impossible to attain through either sensual information or objective reason, Hegel undermines the value of individual perception and thought. Faith, or intuitive production, "...is an inward act, an inner activity, not directed against something already to hand -- the falling asleep of intelligence..."<sup>48</sup>

Hegel's assessment of the value of the individual follows his denigration of individualistic faculties:

"The particular individual is incomplete mind, a concrete shape in whose existence, taken as a whole, one determinate characteristic predominates, while others are found only in blurred outline. In that mind which stands higher than another the lower concrete form of existence has sunk into an obscure moment..."<sup>49</sup>

Thus the individual is an *incomplete* manifestation of Universal Mind, an *obscure moment*.

Our analysis would thus expect Hegel to reject the belief that the individual possesses the ability to determine true from false, good from evil, on his own cognizance. Responding to the Lockean argument that the individual possesses this ability, Hegel writes that:

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, *The Lectures of 1824*, p.428

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, *Dialectic and Human Experience: The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p.40

“According to a view of this kind, the world of ethics... should be given over -- as in fact of course it is not -- to the subjective accident of opinion and caprice.”<sup>50</sup>

And:

“Of course it is easy to recognize that evil, ignorance, passion, selfish inclination, private pursuits and the will that wishes to determine itself for itself obscure the moment of insight into truth as the knowing and willing of the good.”<sup>51</sup>

The criterion of Absolute Unity also demolishes any ethical criteria based on individual self-interest:

“As the substance, being an intelligent substance, particularizes itself abstractly into many persons (the family is only a single person), into families or individuals, who exist independent and free, as private persons, it loses its ethical character: for these persons as such have in their consciousness and as their aim not the absolute unity, but their own petty selves and particular interests.”<sup>52</sup>

Since Absolute Unity is the highest good, it is *impossible* for the individual to be moral unless he or she participates in Absolute Unity. On what grounds, then, can the individual know whether she is participating in Absolute Unity? Certainly not objective, rational grounds, for Absolute Unity is neither objective nor rational. Not according to

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<sup>50</sup>*Ibid*, *Objective Spirit: Human Conduct and Philosophic Truth*, p.259 Hegel's desire to subjugate *entity* to *concept* is explicit: “Hence the concept of right, so far as its coming to be is concerned, falls outside the science of right; it is to be taken up here as given and its deduction is presupposed.” *Ibid*, p.265

<sup>51</sup> Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion **Volume II: Determinate Religion** edited by Peter C. Hodgson Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, *Determinate Religion: The Lectures of 1827*, p.524

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid*, p.276



any empirical evidence, for the senses deal with individual entities, which are of lesser value than concepts.

Like Kant, Hegel appeals to *collectivism* as the defining criterion for Absolute Unity.

Collectivism, as outlined in our introduction, is not the *will of the majority*, for error multiplied does not equal truth. Collectivism is the will of the State. All individuals are thus subject to the will of the State:

“Furthermore, for the paternal soil and the external inorganic resources of nature from which the individual formerly derived his livelihood, [the State] substitutes its own soil and subjects the permanent existence of even the entire family to dependence to itself and to contingency. *Thus the individual becomes a son of civil society which has as many claims upon him as he has rights against it.*”<sup>53</sup>

These “rights” turn out to be illusory, for Hegel follows Kant in placing no limits upon the will of the Enlightened Despot:

“In the government -- regarded as organic totality -- the sovereign power (principate) is (a) *subjectivity* as the *infinite* self-unity of the notion in its development - - the all-sustaining, all-decreeing will of the state, its highest and all-pervasive unity. In the perfect form of the state, in which every each and every element of the notion has reached free existence, this subjectivity is not a so-called ‘moral person,’ or decree issuing from a majority (forms in which the unity of the decreeing will has not an *actual* existence), but an actual individual -- the will of a decreeing individual -- *monarchy*. The monarchical constitution is therefore the constitution of developed reason; all other constitutions belong to the lower grades of the development and realization of reason...”<sup>54</sup>

Given this construct, the relationship between the individual and the state is inevitable:

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<sup>53</sup>*Ibid*, p.279 (emphasis added)

"Sacrifice on behalf of the individuality of the state is the substantial tie between the state and all its members and so is a universal duty."<sup>55</sup>

## LOCKE

Locke's philosophy amounts to almost a complete antithesis of supra-sensualism.

Where Kant argues that reality is unknowable, Locke argues that it *is* knowable; where Kant argues that the senses are invalid arbiters of conceptual truth, Locke argues that the senses are the *source* of conceptual ideas; where Kant argues that the existence of God *limits* reason, Locke argues that reason, being a product of divinity, is *absolute*; where Kant argues for the moral subjugation of the individual, Locke argues that individual ethics are the highest good; where Kant argues for collective dictatorship, Locke argues for individual freedom.

The fundamental difference between the two systems lies not in metaphysics -- for Locke also believes in a 'higher reality' -- but in *epistemology*. The most essential difference is the validity of the senses. Kant argues that the senses are invalid arbiters of truth because they cannot penetrate the 'higher reality,' or *things in themselves*, which have superior truth-value. Locke, on the other hand, argues that the senses are valid arbiters

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<sup>54</sup>*Ibid*, p.290

of truth because they are the tools God has provided man in order that he may know truth. As he puts it:

“If we can find out those measures whereby a rational creature, put in that state in which man is in this world, may and ought to govern his opinions and actions depending thereon, we need not be troubled that some other things escape our knowledge.”<sup>56</sup>

Thus Locke accepts the premise of a ‘higher reality,’ but rejects that it has a higher truth-value *qua* human consciousness. Locke’s purpose in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is to prove that man can attain certainty through the medium of the *senses*, in the *absence of innate ideas*, or “...primary notions... stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being and brings into the world with it.”<sup>57</sup>

First, he notes that no common opinions exist throughout the world; even the Three Laws of logic are not universal, for “children and idiots have not the least apprehension nor thought of them.”<sup>58</sup> The argument often used by supra-sensualists is that common opinions exist *when reason is applied*. Locke replies that “that certainty can never be thought innate which we have need of reason to discover,”<sup>59</sup> for reason is a tool used to

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<sup>55</sup>*Ibid*, p.300

<sup>56</sup>Locke, John *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, abridged and edited by John W. Yolton  
London: Everyman, 1993 p.16

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid*, p.17

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid*, p.18

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid*, p.20

deduce unknown principles from known principles. Locke argues that reason is a *necessary but not sufficient cause* of the discovery of unknown principles, but denies that the use of reason automatically provides them.<sup>60</sup> Even if, however, an understanding of innate ideas was *simultaneous* with the use of reason, it would not prove that these ideas were innate, for they depend on the use of a faculty -- reason -- which is *not* innate.

Instead, Locke argues for the development of the mind from *tabula rasa* to conceptual knowledge through the medium of the senses. For example, since children learn arithmetic involving higher numbers *after* they learn arithmetic involving simple numbers, and that generally “less general propositions are certainly known and firmly assented to by those who are utterly ignorant of those more general axioms,”<sup>61</sup> it would seem that *universal* ideas are derived from *specific* examples, and thus cannot be considered innate. To the question “Hath a child an idea of impossibility and identity before it has of white or black, sweet or bitter?”<sup>62</sup>, Locke would answer *no*: perceptions come from the senses, and concepts are derived from the perceptions.

Turning to morality, Locke finds no innate ethical principles. A den of thieves may act upon the principle of keeping contracts, he argues, but this is a mere convenience

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<sup>60</sup>*Ibid*, p.22 This may be viewed as an application of the sensual Uncertainty Principle; because derivation is a product of consciousness, and all processes of consciousness are subject to error, derivation is not automatic. Thus derivations, or *concepts*, cannot be innate.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid*, p.26

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid*, p.27

among themselves; it is not a *conceptual* moral understanding, for it is not universally acted upon.<sup>63</sup> Any innate moral principle would never be questioned; yet Locke argues that “*there cannot any one moral rule be proposed whereof a man may not justly demand a reason,*”<sup>64</sup> since the reason for any moral principle may be asked, the principle cannot be innate. The only concept which *may* be innate is the idea of God, yet Locke quotes the examples of the ancients and several contemporary societies which know nothing of God.<sup>65</sup>

Epistemologically, the development of concepts thus rests on the sensual perception of entities. According to Locke, concepts such as *white, sweet, hot*, etc. do not exist in the entities themselves, but in our *minds*.<sup>66</sup> Entities possess characteristics which *produce* these perceptions, and those characteristics are innate to entities, but concepts depend on two things central to consciousness: medium and proximity. A red ball, for instance, is not *perceived* as red in the absence of light, nor is it perceived as red in the absence of sight. Thus the concept of red exists in the mind only after the first two conditions have been met. Because circumstantial conditions external to consciousness must be met in order for concepts to be developed, concepts cannot be considered innate to consciousness.

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<sup>63</sup>*Ibid*, p.31

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid*, p.32

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 39-40

Concepts inhabit the mind in *memory*; since one cannot think of *red* without ever having seen *red*, thinking of *red* must involve retrieving previous sense-impressions from the memory, the “storehouse of our ideas.”<sup>67</sup> The most vivid of these memories are those accompanied by pleasure or pain, for “the great business of the senses being to make us notice what hurts or advantages the body.”<sup>68</sup> Thus the central purpose of Locke’s epistemology -- as predicted by our model -- is validating the means by which the mind aids the survival of the body. Because concepts exist only in the mind --i.e. are not *innate* to the soul -- they cannot survive the destruction of rational consciousness; because the mind is dependent on the body, the first and strongest concepts developed by the mind are those which aid the survival of the body.

Locke firmly fixes the Uncertainty Principle in consciousness itself; the truth or falsehood of certain ideas can only be determined by reference to things *external* to consciousness: “Whenever the mind refers any of its *ideas* to anything extraneous to then, they are then *capable to be called true or false*.”<sup>69</sup> For instance, the concept of *centaur* is *false* because centaurs do not exist external to the mind; the concept *man*, on the other hand, is *true* because other men exist *objectively*. Here we can see another development in accordance with our model: *the ability of individuals to determine truth from falsehood*. Be-

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<sup>66</sup>*Ibid*, p.73

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid*, p.83

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid*, p.84

<sup>69</sup>*Ibid*, p.212

cause all individuals possess senses, and the concepts are derived from the senses, and the truth or falsehood of a concepts is determined by its accordance with sensual information, all individuals have the ability to determine truth from falsehood. Furthermore, we predicted earlier that a metaphysical belief in objective reality would result in the epistemological premise of the validity of the senses -- which would in turn result in the epistemological principle that *all concepts, being derived from characteristics of entities, may not contradict the characteristics they describe*. Locke follows our model; having established objective reality and the validity of the senses, he argues that:

“[Concepts] are *false ideas*: when they put together simple *ideas*, which in the real existence of things have no union... *Ideas* of substances are in this respect also *false*, when, from any collection of simple *ideas* that do always exist together, there is separated, by a direct negation, any other simple *idea* which is constantly joined with them. Thus, if to extension, solidity, fusibility, the peculiar weightiness, and yellow colour of gold, anyone join in his thoughts the negation of a greater degree of fixedness than is in lead or copper, he may be said to have a false complex *idea*, as well as when he joins to those other simple ones the *idea* of perfect absolute fixedness. For either way, the complex *idea* of gold, being made up of such simple ones as have no union in nature, may be termed false.”<sup>70</sup>

Thus the concept *gold*, being derived from individual characteristics, may possess no criteria which contradict any individual characteristic of the entities it describes. Our model predicts that this principle, applied to ethics, will result in the principle that the individual good is the only good. Because *good* is a concept, and concepts describe characteristics of individual entities, no collective concept of the *good* may contradict the

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<sup>70</sup>*Ibid*, p.217

good of the individual. Locke firmly establishes this principle in the realm of *language*, noting that words, being concepts, must always refer themselves to things external to consciousness.

The relationship between language and the senses is, for Locke, absolute. Words label concepts derived from entities because “*It is impossible that every particular thing should have a distinct particular name.*”<sup>71</sup> Words identify *definitions* of characteristics, thus they cannot contradict those characteristics. Errors in language arise when men cease to use words as definitions of characteristics external to consciousness, but use the words as *self-defining conceptual structures*, or structures that refer only to themselves. However, if words are clearly and consistently defined in relation to things external to consciousness, and strictly derived from the component characteristics of objective entities, a *science* of morality becomes possible:

“Upon this ground it is that I am bold to think that *morality is capable of demonstration*, as well as mathematics: since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity or incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered, in which consists perfect knowledge.”<sup>72</sup>

Locke’s position that morality may be *objective* and *rational* is directly opposed to the supra-sensual position that morality is *subjective* and *irrational*. Locke establishes his position by noting that morality, being a concept, is derived from principles transmitted

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<sup>71</sup>*Ibid*, p.231



through the *objective* medium of the senses; the senses -- thus language, and thus morality -- are objective because they refer to a realm *external* to consciousness.

Locke's epistemological position thus conforms to our sensual model. *Simple* ideas, or *perceptions*, are incapable of being generated by the mind, and thus must come from a real realm external to our consciousness, and are thus "*are not fictions of our fancies,*"<sup>73</sup> but *objective derivations*. However, there are certain ideas which relate only to *themselves*; mathematics for instance, yet they are still *true* because they are perfectly consistent with their axioms. In this argument Locke deviates from our sensual model, because sensualism holds that mathematics are *idealized abstractions of sensual information, manipulated on the grounds of sensually-derived rationality*. For instance, were no lines to exist in reality, they would not exist in the mind. Locke, however, places *moral knowledge* in this sphere, thus disconnecting it from *empirical* proof. Thus moral knowledge, like mathematics, revolves around the criterion of *internal consistency*. Thus Locke is forced to differentiate *moral truth* from *metaphysical truth*:

*"Moral truth, which is speaking of things according to the persuasion of our own minds, though the proposition we speak agree not to the reality of things. Metaphysical truth, which is nothing but the real existence of things, conformable to the ideas to which we have annexed their names."*<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>*Ibid*, p.283

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid*, p.324

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid*, p.333

This distinction undoubtedly results from Locke's religious beliefs. Because morality is the province of God, and God is not manifested in sensual reality, he cannot conceive of *empirical morality*. His failure to derive absolute morality from sensual premises -- a feat performed at the beginning of this treatise -- left morality open to the charge of subjectivism, and this uncertainty may have prompted Kant to reject *subjectivism* for the sake of *absolutism*; in his terms: reject *knowledge* for the sake of *faith*.<sup>75</sup>

Locke's argument for the existence of a deity is that: "*the invisible things of GOD are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood, by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.*"<sup>76</sup> Something must be eternal, he argues, and that something must be "a cogitive being,"<sup>77</sup> because "it is as impossible that incogitive matter should produce a cogitive being as that nothing, or the negation of all being, should produce a positive being or matter."<sup>78</sup> This erroneous argument may be excused on the grounds of ignorance; having no access to the theory of evolution, the problem of the existence of a rational being may tend to imply creation, yet Locke may be chastised for saying, in

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<sup>75</sup>In Kant's words: "From the critical point of view, therefore, the doctrine of morality and the doctrine of nature may each be true in its own sphere; which could never have been shown had not criticism previously established our unavoidable ignorance of things in themselves, and limited all that we can know to mere phenomena. I have, therefore, found it necessary to deny knowledge of God, freedom and immortality in order to find a place for faith." *The Philosophy of Kant, op cit*, p.6

<sup>76</sup>*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, op cit*, p.359

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid*, p.362

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid*, p.362

the absence of knowledge as to the *origin* of man that “*an unknowable being created us in some incomprehensible manner for an indeterminate purpose.*” In the absence of knowledge, it is better to admit that we do not know rather than pretend knowledge by muttering incomprehensible irrationalities.

On the nature of faith and reason, Locke admits a truth that most supra-sensualists go to great lengths to obscure:

“First, then, I say that *no man inspired by GOD can by any revelation communicate to others any new simple ideas* which they had not before from sensation or reflection.”<sup>79</sup>

This formulation is an essential difference between Locke and the supra-sensualists, and has a great effect on his political philosophy. By openly admitting the subjective and irrational nature of revelation, Locke exposes the fraud attempted by supra-sensualists - however unwitting or unthinking -- in their political formulations. According to supra-sensualists, because revelation cannot be communicated, total obedience to the Enlightened Despot is the only possibility of good for the individual. Locke utterly rejects this principle. Because revelation cannot be communicated in objective terms, and man may know objective truth through sensual rationality, “*no proposition can be received for divine revelation or obtain the assent due to all such, if it be contradictory to our clear intui-*

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<sup>79</sup>*Ibid*, p.408

*tive knowledge.*"<sup>80</sup> By recognizing the subjective nature of revelation, Locke destroys any possibility of revelation participating in the social or political life of man. While Kant felt it necessary to destroy *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*, Locke writes that "*faith* can never convince us of anything that contradicts our knowledge."<sup>81</sup> Locke, placing the Uncertainty Principle in consciousness itself -- in accordance with sensual epistemology -- recognizes that revelation, because it involves consciousness *alone*, is innately subject to error.

Reason, however, being derived from an objective realm external to consciousness, is the final arbiter of truth. Because revelation is a *concept*, and concepts may not contradict sensual characteristics, revelation cannot contradict sensual evidence or objective reason. This axiom destroys the automatic moral authority of the Enlightened Despot. Reason is a faculty possessed by all; revelation is possessed only by some; reason is *more accurate* than revelation, therefore no individual may command another based on revelation. This syllogism, as we shall see, is the central axiom of Locke's political thought.

Before plunging into the *Second Treatise on Government*, let us pause for a moment to review the relationship between Locke's philosophy and our sensual model.

**Metaphysics:** *objective external reality.*

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<sup>80</sup>*Ibid*, p.410

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid*, p.410

**Epistemology:** *validity of the senses; concepts perfectly derived from the senses; concepts may not contradict characteristics of the entities they describe; reason the final arbiter of truth.*

**Ethics:** *The individual may determine good from evil; the role of the mind is to aid the survival of the body; the good is that which aids the body; reason and empiricism serve this end by correctly identifying characteristics of external matter.*

According to our model, these premises will result in a political model of limited democracy. Let us now turn to Locke's political thought to determine if our model holds.

Because sensual evidence and objective reason are within the reach of every individual, all individuals possess the ability to determine truth from falsehood, good from evil.

Thus Locke's formulation of the "social contract" is that individuals enter into the social contract with the government in order to maintain their ability to pursue happiness.

Because the pursuit of happiness is open to all individuals, all individuals have the right to reject a State which undermines or destroys their ability to pursue the good on their own cognizance.<sup>82</sup> As Locke puts it:

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<sup>82</sup>This premise is where Locke parts company with Hobbes, and is the reason why Locke rejects the Hobbesian position that the State is absolute. Because Hobbes does not recognize the capacity of the individual to pursue the good on his own, he is led to the conclusion that the individual has no right to reject the state, thus *any* government is preferable to the Hobbesian state of nature.

“God, who has given the world to men in common, has also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life, and convenience.”<sup>83</sup>

In the *state of nature*, no common judge exists to *enforce* the arbitration of conflicts between citizens. We say *enforce* because reason exists in the state of nature, but reason, not being *innate* to consciousness, may be rejected in favour of violence. The possibility of immorality thus requires the establishment of a state able to *enforce* the rational arbitration of disputes.

What is it, then, that makes the individual subject to the law? First, Locke argues that the capacity of *knowing the law* makes the citizen subject to it.<sup>84</sup> This again rejects the principle of the Enlightened Despot; the Enlightened Despot is unjust because his will, being a product of revelation and therefore *unknowable*, cannot bind his subjects.

Our prediction that the concept of the *good* is only a description of *individual good* is borne out as well:

“But though every man who has entered into a civil society... has thereby quitted his power to punish offenses, against the law of *nature*, in prosecution of his own private judgment, yet with the judgment of offenses, which he has given up to the magistrate, he has given a right to the common-wealth to employ his force, for the execution of the judgments of the common-wealth, whenever he shall be called to it, are indeed his own judgments, they being made by himself, or his

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<sup>83</sup>Locke, John Second Treatise of Government edited, with an Introduction, by C.B. Macpherson Cambridge: Hackett, 1980 p.18

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p.33

representative."<sup>85</sup>

Thus the state is a *representative* of individual morality. The individual, possessing reason, can judge for himself, yet turns his sovereignty over to the state because the state possesses more power; moral retribution is thus not a condition of moral individual versus immoral individual, but immoral individual versus the *morally-authorized* state. The state thus acts as the individual would have acted in accordance with the *law of nature*. Because the act of surrendering individual judgment to law is dependent on the just application of the law of nature -- a law perceived and understood by every rational citizen -- the citizen is perfectly justified in *withdrawing his authorization* -- i.e. *rejecting* the laws -- if the law undermines the natural rights of the individual.<sup>86</sup> Because the state derives its moral authority from its conformity with the objective law of nature, the *self-defining will* of the Enlightened Despot cannot create valid laws:

"Hence it is evident, that *absolute monarchy*, which by some men is counted the only government in the world, is indeed *inconsistent with civil society*, and so can be no form of civil-government at all..."<sup>87</sup>

The existence of an *objective judge* -- the law of nature -- is the central mediating factor between the ruler and the ruled. Neither may contradict this law; the problem of the

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid*, p.47

<sup>86</sup>"Every man being, as has been showed, *naturally free*, and nothing being able to put him into subjection to any earthly power, but only his own *consent*; it is to be considered, what shall be understood to be a *sufficient declaration* for a man's *consent*, to make him *subject* to the laws of any government." *Ibid*, p.63

Enlightened Despot is that, because his will is both law *and* justice, there exists no higher authority that can be appealed to in the face of perceived injustice. Although this troubles supra-sensualists such as Kant and Hegel not at all, Locke finds this lack of mediation abhorrent:

“For he being supposed to have all, both legislative and executive power in himself alone, there is no judge to be found, no appeal lies open to any one, who may fairly, and indifferently, and with authority decide, and from whose decision relief and redress may be expected of any injury and inconviency, that may be suffered from the prince, or by his order: so that such a man, however entitled, *Czar*, or *Grand Seignior*, or how you please, is as much *in the state of nature*, with all under his dominion, as he is with the rest of mankind: for wherever any two men are, who have no standing rule, and common judge to appeal to on earth, for the determination of controversies of right between them, they are still *in the state of nature*...”<sup>88</sup>

The only mediation possible between men in the absence of an objective judge is violence; thus the citizen of the Enlightened Despot is in a *state of nature* with his ruler; the only difference being that the victim of a dictatorship is vastly outgunned by the dictator.

Because values do not exist without consciousness -- i.e. they are not *innate* to the soul -- the purpose of consciousness is to aid the survival of the body. According to our sensual model, because the body requires *property* in order to survive, the right to individual property *must* be absolute. Again, Locke follows our prediction perfectly. The right

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<sup>87</sup>*Ibid*, p.48

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid*, p.48-49



to property exists in the state of nature; this right *precedes* the creation of the state, therefore no state may contradict natural right. Because the state is established primarily to protect property;<sup>89</sup> no state may take away property without the consent of the owner.<sup>90</sup>

## HOBBS

Hobbes represents a special case for our analysis.<sup>91</sup> Metaphysically, he agrees with Locke's belief in an external objective reality and the validity of the senses. From this sensual base, however, he deviates in his conception of epistemology and ethics by arguing that the individual does not possess the capacity to determine truth and falsehood and good from evil. One of the reasons for this may be that, where Locke did not appear to subscribe to the doctrine of original sin,<sup>92</sup> Hobbes *does*, and thus the ability of the individual to determine good from evil is seriously compromised; Hobbes, in fact, called belief in the validity of individual moral judgment a "seditious" doctrine.<sup>93</sup> This

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<sup>89</sup>"The great and *chief end*, therefore, of men's uniting into common-wealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property." *Ibid*, p.66

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid*, p.73

<sup>91</sup>Although Hobbes wrote before Locke -- and influenced him -- I have placed Hobbes after Locke in our analysis because he is a more complicated case.

<sup>92</sup>See Wood, Neal John Locke and Agrarian Capitalism Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p.78

<sup>93</sup> "Among the 'diseases of a commonwealth' Hobbes put the 'seditious' doctrine that every private man is judge of good and evil actions." Watkins, J.W.N. Hobbes's System Of Ideas: A Study in the Political Significance of Philosophical Theories London: Hutchinson University Library, 1973, p.111 J.W.N. Watkins notes that Hobbes despises three ideas: (1) that private men are judges of good and evil; (2) that it is a sin  
(continued)

compromise leaves the individual without access to objective morality, thus removing the possibility of judging the Enlightened Despot by a moral standard higher than his own will. Because of this deviation, Hobbes begins with sensual premises and ends with supra-sensual epistemology, ethics and politics.

Hobbes' materialistic approach posited that human consciousness was a faculty of cause and effect. The senses received valid impressions of external substance;<sup>94</sup> these impressions remained in the imagination, which is "...nothing else but sense decaying, or weakened, by the absence of the object."<sup>95</sup> Because Hobbes, like Hume, views the intellect as weaker than the passions,<sup>96</sup> he rejects individual rationality as the final arbiter of moral values. In this he takes the same approach as Kant; both wish to found their moral systems on the most absolute basis of human nature; Kant rejects rational self-interest as intrinsically immoral, while Hobbes rejects rational self-interest as incom-

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to do something against one's private conscience; and (3) that man's private conscience may be divinely inspired. The elimination of these three considerations effectively destroys the individual's moral right to resist the dictates of the Enlightened Despot. See Hobbes's System Of Ideas, *op cit*, p.3

<sup>94</sup>"SENSE is a phantasm, made by the reaction and endeavour outwards in the organ of sense, caused by an endeavour inwards from the object, remaining for some time more or less." Hobbes, Thomas The Metaphysical System of Hobbes in Twelve Chapters from Elements of Philosophy Concerning Body Together With Briefer Extracts from Human Nature and Leviathan selected by Mary Whiton Calkins. Chicago, Open Court, 1913 p.117

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid*, p.121

<sup>96</sup>Because of the power of the emotions, "Will therefore is the last appetite in deliberating." Shelton, George Morality and Sovereignty in the Philosophy of Hobbes London: MacMillan 1992, p.8

patible with the existence of a stable society, for the self-interest of the individual is to aggrandize his power at every opportunity.<sup>97</sup> Thus while Kant views the individual will as an *immoral* basis for morality, Hobbes views it as an *impractical* basis for morality. Where Kant substitutes *duty* for personal will, Hobbes substitutes *obedience*. Politically, the result of the two formulations is the same: subjugation of the individual to the will of the Enlightened Despot.

The central human drive Hobbes appeals to in his ethical formulations is the desire for *survival*.<sup>98</sup> All human beings wish to survive; in the Hobbesian state of nature this desire is manifested by the war of all against all; men may desire peace, but gain great advantage from conquest. Since they do not fully know the minds of their neighbours, they cannot be sure that their desire for peace will be reciprocated. They may thus be tempted to launch a “pre-emptive strike” against them. Thus even a good person who wants peace has good reason for initiating force against his fellows; throw in a good smattering of men who do not want peace, and violent anarchy is a certainty.

The Hobbesian “state of nature” is similar to Locke’s. Two essential differences, however, remain. First, according to Hobbes, no right to property exists in a state of nature;

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<sup>97</sup> “Covetousness of great riches, and ambition to great honours, are honourable; as signs of the power to obtain them. Covetousness, and ambition, of little gains, or preferments, is dishonourable.” (80,56)

Shelton, George Morality and Sovereignty in the Philosophy of Hobbes, *op cit*, quoted p.13

<sup>98</sup> “His conclusion was that the structure of morality was best understood if it could be seen as resting on the strongest of all human drives, that of survival.” *Ibid*, p.135

because of his emphasis on positive law, if something cannot be enforced, it is not a right.<sup>99</sup> Thus Locke's idea that the state is created not to *establish* the right to property, but to *defend* it, is rejected, removing the possibility of rejecting a law that harms the right to property. Secondly, Locke argues that the state is a *representative* of the individual's natural moral authority, an authority which exists prior to the state and may be repealed if the state acts against the individual's authority. Hobbes disagrees violently; he explicitly rejects the principle that the individual can discriminate between objective good and evil, on the grounds that no such concepts exist:

"But whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it for which for his part calleth good: and the object of his hate and aversion, evil." (41,120)<sup>100</sup>

By identifying moral terms with individual preferences, Hobbes destroys the possibility of *objective morality*, and thus of an *absolute standard by which conflicts between individuals - including ruler and citizen -- may be mediated*. Because morality is not absolute, it becomes *conditional*, a kind of *prudence*, or acting in ways which will ensure survival and success. Now, because our survival and success rest upon many considerations beyond our control, no absolute statements about either may be reliably made. Absolute mo-

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<sup>99</sup>According to Hobbes: "A law is the command of him or them that have the sovereign power, given to those that be his or their subjects, declaring publicly and plainly what every one of them may do, and what they must forbear to do." Laird, John. Hobbes London: Ernest Benn Ltd. 1934, quoted p.219

reality is unconditional: *do this because it is good*. Pragmatic prudence is conditional: *if you want the greatest chance of success, do this*. In Hobbes' words:

"No discourse whatsoever, can end in absolute knowledge of fact, past, or to come. For, as for the knowledge of fact, it is originally, sense; for ever after, memory. And for the knowledge of consequences, which I have said before is called science, it is not absolute, but conditional."<sup>101</sup>

This principle -- that "what is good for us is evil for our enemies"<sup>102</sup> -- means that the individual, if he wishes to exist in a peaceful society, must surrender his right of individual judgment to a single ruler. This ruler *cannot* be a moral representative of the individual, for the good of the individual is *subjective* to his or her personal desires, thus the individual can have no recourse to a moral authority that transcends the will of the ruler.

Yet Hobbes' approach would seem to raise a considerable danger to the stability of the state. If every individual desires power, and the ruler has no objective moral right to rule (such as revelation or a divine right to rule), why would ambitious individuals not be justified trying to increase their power by replacing the ruler with *themselves*?

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<sup>100</sup> Morality and Sovereignty in the Philosophy of Hobbes, *op cit*, quoted p.4 Hobbes reminds us that "...these words of good, evil and contemptible, are never used with relation to the person that useth them, there being nothing simply or absolutely so." *Ibid*, p.5

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p.10

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p.4

Hobbes' reply is that revolution is both *imprudent* and *unjust*. It is *imprudent* for two reasons: the result of unsuccessful revolution is *death* (which contradicts the primal drive for survival), and revolution encourages others by example -- sort of a "Macbeth" morality. It is *unjust* because it is a *breaking of covenant*.<sup>103</sup> The ambitious individual has accepted the peace, stability and authority of the state, (as opposed to the anarchy of the state of nature) and thus cannot arbitrarily decide to break his implicit covenant.

Thus the state may not be either questioned, undermined, or rebelled against. As can be expected from this approach, the central question of political philosophy -- *what is the best form of the state?* -- becomes, for Hobbes, largely irrelevant:

"Hobbes held that comparisons between these forms of government were largely academic, partly (II,xxii) because they yielded only probable, not demonstrably true, conclusions, partly because, in any state, 'the present government ought always to be preferred, maintained and accounted best.'"<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Hobbes defines injustice as "no other than the not performance of covenant." (131,202) Morality and Sovereignty in the Philosophy of Hobbes, *op cit*, p.71 Regarding the individual's inability to break his covenant, Hobbes writes that: "He therefore that breaketh his covenant, and consequently declareth that he thinks he may with reason do so, cannot be received into any society, that unite themselves for peace and defense, but by the error of them that receive him; now when he is received, be retained in it, without seeing the danger of their error, which errors a man cannot reasonably reckon upon as the means of his security." *Ibid*, p.57

<sup>104</sup> Hobbes, *op cit*, p.211

Any attempt to revolt against the state -- or even significantly reform it -- would open up the possibility of reverting to a state of nature and would involve breaking the implicit covenant between ruler and ruled.

Thus we can see that, while Hobbes begins with a sensual metaphysical approach, his identification of "good" with "desired" destroys any possibility of objective morality.

Thus the individual is left with no moral defense against the dictates of the Enlightened Despot; the will of the Hobbesian ruler -- like that Kantian despot -- *is* the law, and thus may not be compared to or contradicted by any higher law. Regarding the disparity between his metaphysical premises and political theories, we may leave the final word to Hobbes (from his preface to *De Cive*):

"...though I have endeavoured, by arguments... to gain a belief in man, that monarchy is the most commodious government [yet this] one thing alone I confess in this whole book not to be demonstrated, but only probably stated."<sup>105</sup>

This echoes Kant:

"We cannot criticize our deduction of the supreme principle of morality for failing to explain how the unconditional practical law is absolutely necessary (as the categorical imperative must be). The fault lies in human reason itself; and yet we cannot blame reason for being unwilling to explain the moral law by an appeal to some conditional interest, for any such law would not be moral-- it could not be the supreme law of freedom. And while we cannot comprehend the unconditional practical necessity of the moral imperative, we can at least explain

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<sup>105</sup>Hobbes's System Of Ideas, *op cit*,, quoted p.15

why we cannot explain it -- which is all that we can ask fairly of a philosophy which tries by its principles to reach the very limit of human reason."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>Kant on the Foundation of Morality: A Modern Version of the Grundlegung, *op cit*, p. 258



## **CONCLUSION**

The person who argues for the existence of a 'higher reality' that opposes the nature of material reality creates a number of significant contradictions, which are expressed in the following arguments:

- 1) The senses are inconsistent with a 'higher reality'
- 2) Thus consistency is the arbiter of truth
- 3) The senses are consistent
- 4) The 'higher reality' is inconsistent with both the senses and itself
- 5) Thus the 'higher reality' is less consistent than the senses
- 6) Yet consistency is the arbiter of truth
- 7) Thus the argument for a 'higher reality' is false.

### **Another argument:**

- 1) Consistency is the arbiter of truth
- 2) Inconsistency cannot produce consistency
- 3) The 'higher reality' is inconsistent
- 4) Thus the concept of 'consistency' cannot come from the higher reality

- 5) Thus the concept of 'consistency' must be derived from the physical senses
- 6) Thus an argument derived from the senses is being used to invalidate the senses
- 7) Therefore the argument for a 'higher reality' is false

**Another argument:**

- 1) All arguments involve language
- 2) Language is a conceptual tool derived from the information of the senses
- 3) Thus all arguments against the validity of the senses require a tool derived from the senses
- 4) Therefore all arguments against the validity of the senses is false

**Another argument:**

- 1) All arguments -- spoken or written -- must be perceived by the senses
- 2) Thus all arguments must assume the validity of the senses
- 3) Thus any arguments against the senses are false

**Another argument:**

- 1) All consciousnesses open to argument have access to the senses
- 2) Only some consciousnesses have access to a 'higher reality'
- 3) Thus access to the senses is *innate* to consciousness
- 4) Thus access to a 'higher reality' is *not* innate to consciousness
- 5) Therefore access to the senses is an objective characteristic of consciousness
- 6) Therefore access to a 'higher reality' is a subjective characteristic of consciousness
- 7) Therefore any argument for the validity of a 'higher reality' requires that subjectivity has a higher value than objectivity
- 8) Thus no objective criteria may be brought to bear on an argument for a 'higher reality'
- 9) Thus no argument for a 'higher reality' can be anything more than a subjective, unsubstantiated statement
- 10) No unsubstantiated statement may contain any more truth than any other unsubstantiated statement
- 11) Therefore the unsubstantiated statement "there is a 'higher reality'" contains no more truth than the unsubstantiated statement "there is no 'higher reality'"
- 12) Therefore the statement "there is a 'higher reality'" may be accurately contradicted by the statement 'there is no 'higher reality'"

Here we can see that one needs no philosophical sophistication to accurately contradict the argument for a 'higher reality'. The argument contradicts itself, much in the same manner that the statement "we can know nothing" contradicts itself, for it is itself a statement of knowledge. Being contradictory, it contains no truth value.

It is hard to understand why such a patently false notion has had such a powerful influence in history. However, it is important to remember that the purpose of a belief in a 'higher reality' is *not* to determine truth from falsehood, but to destroy the possibility of individual determination of truth and falsehood. It is a weapon against the epistemological sovereignty of the individual. If the individual believes that he cannot determine truth from falsehood, he is far easier to control. This is why totalitarian doctrines; religion, communism, fascism, nazism and so on all focus on the invalidation of the senses and/or empirical reason. All these doctrines posit the existence of a realm of truth not open to individual determination or objective definition; for religion it is the will of the deity and the natural superiority of the faithful; for communism the operation of material dialecticism and the natural superiority of the proletariat, for fascism and nazism it is expression of the World-Will and the natural superiority of the nation-state and the race, respectively. The insistent supra-sensual message is: *you cannot know the truth, for it is beyond your understanding*. When pressed, however, all supra-sensualists reveal that the 'truth' is beyond *all* understanding. However, the purpose of

supra-sensualism is the destruction of individual judgment, which is a prime requirement for all who wish to do evil without opposition.

Supra-sensualism thus destroys any possibility of the objective validation of truth. Because all information comes into the mind through the senses, and all concepts must be checked by reason or empiricism, any concept which fails the test is an erroneous product of consciousness. Supra-sensualism is, in effect, the attempt to make consciousness the validator of *itself*, making the accused both judge and defendant. Because consciousness validates *itself*, unsubstantiated belief becomes truth. Because the authority of both senses and reason must be rejected for the mind to validate itself, no external argument or proof can hold sway against belief. In other words, supra-sensualism establishes the sole authority of *faith*, creating epistemological despotism.

Any attempt to make morality *unconditional* -- i.e. to make it unrelated to any external human circumstances -- makes morality *self-defining*. Our analysis has shown that, if morality becomes *unconditional* it necessarily becomes *subjective*. If the morality bows to no objective conditions, it cannot act as an objective mediator between individual disputes. Politically, this lack of objective mediation renders the relationship between individual and ruler one of absolute obedience. Because disputes *must* be mediated for society to function, the only possibility of mediation in the absence of objective standards is the will of the Enlightened Despot.

As an example of the power of sensual ethics, let us examine a moral question posed by Kant: *should one lie to the murderer seeking the whereabouts of a friend?*

Kant's answer is: *One must not lie to the murderer. Morality is unconditional, therefore lying is **always** wrong.*

The sensual answer is: *One **must** lie to the murderer. Morality serves the physical survival of the body. If an individual is threatening someone's physical survival, it is immoral to further that purpose.*

To the question: *why is lying wrong?*, Kant would answer: *lying cannot exist in the absence of truth, therefore lying cannot be a universal rule of conduct, therefore lying is wrong because it violates the Categorical Imperative.*

Sensualism answers: *The purpose of morality is to aid the survival of the physical body. Rational consciousness aids the survival of the body by accurately identifying external substance. The primary reference for rational consciousness is thus external reality. To lie is to act on the premise that rational consciousness has a higher truth-value than external reality. This premise contradicts the purpose of consciousness. Contradictions undermine the ability of consciousness to function effectively. Lying creates a **fear of truth**; the liar becomes afraid of honesty and thus is forced to surround himself with liars and/or fools. For the liar, **gullibility** becomes a greater value than **integrity**. The liar becomes thus cut off from objective reality; he begins to **despise** it; the realm he must deal with effectively in order to survive becomes his **enemy**. His con-*

*sciousness is perverted; it begins to work against his survival. The liar cannot win in his war against reality, for reality is the final arbiter of truth, thus he becomes more and more anxious, contradictory, afraid, ashamed, hateful and, possibly, violent. His chances of success -- as well as survival -- become dim. Thus, because morality is that which serves the survival and success of life -- and this success requires the clear and consistent use of rational consciousness -- lying is immoral.*

Politically, the premise that morality serves the survival and success of physical life creates powerful criteria whereby the individual may reject an unjust state. Any law which undermines or destroys the individual's ability to reason freely by initiating force or fraud against its citizens is, according to sensualism, *not* a law, but an unjust command, and must be morally resisted.

The danger faced by the modern world is the absence of such moral criteria. Lacking objective criteria for the resolution of disputes, society is rapidly drifting towards totalitarianism. We must all ask ourselves the most essential moral question: *How can I know right from wrong?* Sensualism answers: *truth is that which does not contradict reason and the senses.* If we do not accept this conclusion -- for there is no other -- we destroy our ability to determine right from wrong, thus lending credence to the supra-sensual model of totalitarian control. In the absence of objective reason, we become the pall-bearers of freedom.

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